Buenavista, Malalad lead 7-gold RP splurge in SEAG

Story in Sports, PAGE A25

Cops framed me, says No. 4 'most wanted'

AKO YUNG BIKTIMA HINDI KIDNAPPER!
SA PRESINTO KA MAGPALIWANAG!

By Joey A. Gabieta, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

TACLOBAN CITY—The man identified as the country's No. 4 most wanted kidnapper criticized the government last week, saying it had done a

COPS/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Palace: Drug lords also face execution

By Juliet L. Javellana, Christian V. Esguerra and Carlito Pablo

A DAY after announcing that only convicted kidnappers would be executed, Malacañang yesterday changed its mind again. The Palace said that convicted high-profile drug dealers would not be spared from lethal injection.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio

PALACE/ A19

Abu Sayyaf's Robot hurt, nabbed in Sulu

GMA congratulates Isafp on operation

By Julie Alipala, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

THE ABU Sayyaf's Commander Robot, wanted for a string of kidnappings, including those of dozens of foreign hostages at a Malaysia resort in April 2000, was wounded and captured last night in an encounter with the military in Indanan, Sulu.

Maj. Gen. Trifonio Salazar, head of the 1st Tabak Infantry Division, said Robot, whose real name is Galib Andang, was brought to the headquarters of the Army's 104th Brigade in Jolo, Sulu, after the clash in Barangay Panabuan about 8:30 p.m. on Sunday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo congratulated the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the capture of Robot, who carried a P5-million price on his head.

Ms Macapagal told the INQUIRER that the military was now working for the capture of the only remaining Abu Sayyaf leader, Khaddafy Janjalani.

Salazar said troops of the Army's 104th Brigade and the Military Intelligence Group under the Isafp were involved in Robot's capture. He did not provide other details.

But sources at the Southern Command said Robot suffered gunshot wounds in his legs.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Yapching, commander of 104th Brigade, said Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya was going to Sulu "first thing in the morning."

"This is one big step in our international fight against terrorism," said Abaya.

The military denied earlier reports that Andang had been killed in the encounter.

The Abu Sayyaf has been branded a terrorist organization by Washington and Manila and is strongly believed to have links with the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden.

Andang was the most senior leader of the Abu Sayyaf accounted for by the military since the killing of another leader of the group, Mujib Susukan, in February. *With TJ Burgonio and Hernan de la Cruz; AFP*

MARIAN PROCESSION
Benedict Bianan places flowers on the float of the Our Lady of Perpetual Parish of Cubao, Quezon City, one of the 58 floats that participated in last night's La Naval de Manila procession in Intramuros. The activity was sponsored by the Department of Tourism. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

10 tycoons bankroll campaign of top bets

TEN high rollers and a reclusive religious leader will have a huge bearing on the upcoming presidential election in which President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to face a stiff challenge from movie icon Fernando Poe Jr., experts say.

Top presidential contenders in the past had tried to win votes by courting the support of the tycoons, mostly from the Chinese-Filipino community, and Eraño "Ka Erdie" Manalo, leader of the bloc-voting Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) Christian sect.

Usually, 10 of these super-rich individuals and families finance the presidential election, giving P1 billion ($18 million) to each of the leading candidates, veteran campaign strategist Tony Gatmaitan told Agence France Presse.

"Eighty percent are from the Chinese-Filipino community," Gatmaitan said.

Each beneficiary is expected to have a P10-billion kitty one month before the national and local elections in May next year, after the donors check national surveys and place their bets on the top three, he added.

Donors tend to stay anonymous but they know they are assured of future rewards, said Gatmaitan, the campaign manager of brewer San Miguel Corp.'s chief executive Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco when the latter lost to Fidel Ramos in the 1992 presidential race. Cojuangco has abandoned plans to run for president next year.

A different sort of broker is Manalo, the reclusive leader of the INC sect of 1.9 million members. Ms Macapagal, a Roman Catholic, attends the INC's annual fetes and says Manalo had given her "wise counsel" many times.

While Catholicism dominates the country and politicians actively court several other large sects, "the Iglesia is the only real bloc-voting group," said Mahar Mangahas of the Manila-based Social Weather Stations, a private research organization.

But the ethnic Chinese, who number less than a million, are "the most potent (election

10 TYCOONS/ A20

4-way presidential race to favor GMA

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE SCENARIO of a four-headed electoral struggle for the presidency in 2004 crystallizes in the wake of the seemingly unbridgeable fissure in the opposition following the expulsion of Sen. Panfilo Lacson from the selection process stage-managed by Sen. Edgardo Angara to the advantage of actor Fernando Poe Jr.

A four-person struggle is likely to enhance the electoral chances of the administration's candidate, President Macapagal-Arroyo. A closely contested election result is fraught with the dangers of election fraud that would mar the legitimacy of the results and could spark post-election unrest.

But in this fissure in the opposition, Poe has become a plague on both houses—that of the administration coalition led by Ms Macapagal, who is having unfounded nightmares over the phantom of Poe's inflated "winnability," and that of the opposition which has been split down the middle by the bitter rivalry between Lacson and Poe over who would be the opposition's single flag-bearer in the 2004 elections.

The cleavage that was opened by Poe's presidential candidacy announced outside the process mediated by Angara, head of the largest opposition party LDP, has damaged the opposition while, at the same time, delivered advantages to Ms Macapagal, allowing

4-WAY/ A4

Danao gun makers busy as polls near

DANAO CITY—Jose is looking forward to brisk business ahead of the presidential elections next May.

But he is not in the market to provide campaign placards or even the food that candidates are fond of handing out to the poor to attract votes.

Politicians are among the steady stream of customers for revolvers and machine pistols that Jose produces in the backyard of his home here in Cebu.

"Usually, we sell a lot when an election is coming and on our part we are very happy," Jose, 35, told Reuters in his stuffy one-man workshop devoted to churning out the crude, illegal but highly effective weapons.

With as many as one in 80 Filipinos owning a firearm, and gun licenses regarded as optional, shootings over trivial incidents, such as traffic altercations, are commonplace.

After several shootings sparked by "My Way," the Frank Sinatra favorite has become a song to avoid at karaoke bars.

But it is during bitterly fought elections that gun violence traditionally surges as rival clans with long histories of enmity battle for

DANAO/ A20

Bazaar draws out talents of people with disabilities

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE LOVELY black bag at Marissa Velez's stall sells for P150, but the perseverance that made it is priceless.

All the merchandise sold in 16 booths at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Makati during the Christmas party hosted by the Archdiocese of Manila Office for Persons with Disabilities Ministries (AMO-PDM) had been made by persons with disabilities (PWD).

The affair yesterday was a kind of annual coming-out party for PWDs, a day of proving to the world that they can grow, learn and serve.

BAZAAR / A5

DENNIS Ilagan (right) and Charito Manglapus, both from the Cerebral Palsy Association of the Philippines, arrange their products at a charity bazaar at the Don Bosco in Makati. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Volunteers reap 'little victories' in countryside

By Volt Contreras

DOORS could have opened easily in the corporate world for an Ateneo management engineering graduate like Mark Lopez. But instead he took to the hinterlands of Oriental Mindoro, where one day he saw how some Mangyans were duped by lowland merchants into bartering up to three sacks of corn for a small tin of salt.

The members of the indigenous community were that exploited when Lopez, then fresh from college, arrived in their village in 1997 as a community organizer. He began "empowering" them by teaching them how to form a cooperative, with the seed money pooled from the people themselves and later augmented by outside donors.

After nine months, a variety store run by the tribesmen opened in their isolated community. "Nobody charges them high prices or forces them into unfair trade anymore," Lopez proudly told the INQUIRER six years later.

Such "little victories," as he now calls them, are silently being won around the country thanks to a number of fresh college graduates enlisted over the

VOLUNTEERS/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers mostly over the eastern sections.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/08/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONT PAGE
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Ebdane includes Matillano in gripe board

By Christian V. Esguerra

PHILIPPINE National Police chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. has formed a fact-finding board to look into complaints of corruption and favoritism in the PNP which surfaced in the wake of last week's controversial revamp of the country's police force.

To be headed by Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay, PNP chief for administration, the fact-finding board will be composed of all members of the directorial staff, including Director Eduardo Matillano, who brought up the complaints and demanded Ebdane's resignation for failure of leadership.

Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, PNP spokesperson, said the board will actually serve as a grievance mechanism to allow disgruntled officers to air their gripes without violating the chain of command.

Among the first complaints to be tackled by the board this week would be Matillano's allegations of mismanagement of funds and the "*bata-bata system*" (favoritism) in the promotion of officers under Ebdane's administration.

On Thursday, after being sacked as chief of the powerful Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Matillano also accused members of the PNP "comptroller family" of pocketing "20-25 percent" of PNP funds.

He also branded as "faulty" the revamp involving 32 positions because it neither had the blessings of the Senior Officers Placement Board nor the National Police Commission.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had castigated Matillano for "laundering" his complaint in public before setting him up for a reconciliatory meeting with Ebdane last Friday.

After Matillano, a group of middle-level police officers calling itself the Police ROTC Graduates for Integrity, Morality and Order (Primo) surfaced to protest the revamp, claiming that top PNP posts were being monopolized by graduates of the Philippine Military Academy.

Matillano, himself a PMA graduate, yesterday admitted there was a grain of truth to Primo's complaint. "They have to be given positions commensurate to their rank and qualification," he told the INQUIRER. "And, of course, seniority is very important."

Goltiao said the Aglipay board would summon Primo members led by Director Lucas Managuelod to hear their complaints.

"We are trying to reach out to them so we can address their concerns," Goltiao said in a telephone interview.

In a three-page letter signed by 39 Primo officers, the group claimed that its members "have always been relegated to the background despite our outstanding credentials and track records."

"Despite our integrity and fidelity to the chain of command," they added, "we are not afforded equal opportunities. Only PMAyers are."

Primo said the so-called PMA "mafia" controls all but four of the PNP's national support units and all regional offices except for regions 7, 8, 12, Caraga, and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

But Goltiao maintained that all incumbent PNP officials, including those affected by the revamp, were chosen on the basis of merit and competence that include seniority, schooling and previous assignments.

Team-up with Roco possible, says Gloria

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is "open" to the possibility of teaming up with former Education Secretary Raul Roco for the May 2004 polls.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan yesterday said this was the President's reply when the proposal was made to her during a meeting Saturday night with Liberal Party leaders who have started to hold talks with presidential aspirants in search of the one they would support.

Pangilinan, LP vice chair, said he and Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III raised the possibility of a "GMA-Roco unity under one banner" during the discussion at the home of Senate President and LP chair Franklin Drilon.

"The President said she was open to it," Pangilinan told the INQUIRER.

Drilon said the LP could also end up backing opposition candidates Fernando Poe Jr. or Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

In a statement, the LP chair denied reports that the LP was split between President Macapagal and Roco. He said his party was set to meet this week with Roco, standard-bearer of the Alliance of Hope, as well as with Poe and Lacson.

Drilon bared the party's criteria for a presidential candidate: integrity, commitment to serve the poor, competence for good governance, and a concrete platform of government.

On Thursday in Iloilo, Sen. Manuel Villar said the influential Wednesday Group might support Roco for president if Sen. Noli de Castro would not run for either president or vice president.

Villar said Ms Macapagal was "a close ally ... but there is a bigger chance that we will support Senator Roco."

The Wednesday Group includes Villar, Pangilinan, De Castro, and Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto. ***Christine O. Avendaño and Carlito Pablo Jr., Manila, and Raj Padilla, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Ping, Poe meet pushed to save opposition

By Carlito Pablo and Christine O. Avendaño

IN A last-ditch effort to unite a divided opposition, some quarters are pushing presidential candidates Sen. Panfilo Lacson and movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. to sit down, talk and decide who between them will be opposition's standard-bearer in 2004.

Rep. Agapito Aquino (LDP, Makati), secretary general of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and a Lacson partisan, yesterday acknowledged that the separate declarations of Lacson's and Poe's candidacies was not helping the opposition any.

"What is important at this point is for the two aspirants to sit down and settle between themselves how to arrive at a single presidential bet for the opposition," Aquino said.

He said the two aspirants could still meet before Dec. 15, the first day for the filing of certificates of candidacies.

"The only solution is for them to have a one-on-one meeting," agreed Angelito Banayo, political adviser of Lacson, in a phone interview. "Because at the end of the day, one of them might give way."

Whatever the two presidential aspirants decide, he said their camps would have to abide by it.

The newly formed opposition group Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, led by Sen. Edgardo Angara, the other day announced that Poe, known as the "Da King or FPJ," will be the united opposition's standard-bearer, after Lacson ignored the selection process when he was proclaimed by a splinter group from the LDP last week.

But Banayo said that Lacson is determined to run despite the KNP move supporting Poe's candidacy.

In an interview, Banayo said that what happened last week was the LDP merely nominated Lacson standard-bearer.

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American consultant of Ayalas shot dead

LUCENA CITY—An American consultant of an Ayala-owned real estate company was shot dead Saturday afternoon at a project site in Calamba City allegedly by a security guard of the same firm.

Christopher Paul Celiga, 41, project manager for Ayala Greenfields, was shot dead by guard Emilio Rosales, according to Senior Supt. Roberto Garcia, Calamba police chief.

Garcia said the killing occurred after a heated argument between the two men who had been drinking.

"It was an ordinary killing and not the work of the New People's Army as earlier reported," Garcia told the INQUIRER over the phone.

Initial suspicion had fallen on the NPA whose guerrillas are known to operate in the area.

Garcia said the suspect is now the subject of a manhunt.

Celiga, who hailed from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had been working on a golf course development project for a year. He was married to a Filipina he had met in Jordan and they were living in company housing near the project site.

Garcia quoted Seliga's wife, Fe, as saying that her husband had been having a feud with some of his Filipino co-workers.

NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal was quick to deny responsibility for the killing.

"That's not the work of the NPA," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

"The victim was a civilian and not a target for military attack," Rosal said.

He said Ayala's real estate developments had earned them "enemies," especially among the farmers in the Calabarzon region.

"Most of their real estate projects cause misery to farmers," he said. "There's also bloody bickering between real estate developers in the area," he added. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; AP*

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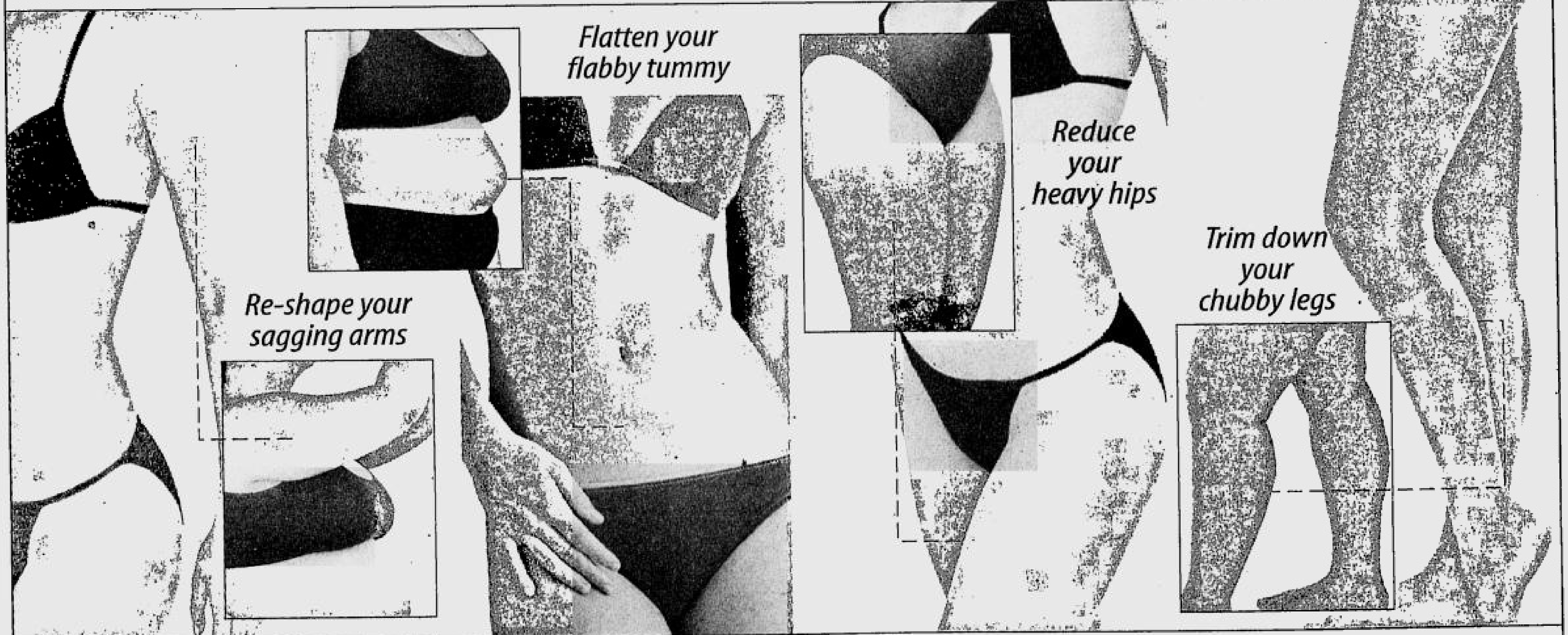
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Volunteers reap 'little victories' in countryside

From page A1

past 23 years by the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines (JVP), an Ateneo de Manila University-based organization that calls on lay people to spend at least a year working for free for the poor.

The recruits are usually deployed as teachers, catechists, livelihood skills trainors, or community organizers connected with a school, parish, or nongovernment organization that needs highly educated personnel for "underserved" areas.

The JVP was once directly run by the Jesuits who established it in 1980, starting with seven volunteers sent to Mindanao. By 1993, it became the JVP Foundation Inc. after Ateneo handed over the management of its programs to former volunteers like Lopez, who at 27 is now the foundation's executive director.

Make no mistake about it: the JVP volunteer program is no mere "exposure" trip. "We're doing real service," he said in an interview on Nov. 19 when the JVP held a recruitment campaign on the campus of Ateneo.

Open to all

Lopez said it was a "misconception" that only students of Ateneo schools around the country can join his group. Of the close to 700 volunteers that the JVP has tapped so far, about 25 percent have come from other colleges and universities. It's open to all Filipino college graduates or graduating students.

Gina Alfonso is another JVP alumna who, after some "soul searching" following her yearlong stint as a volunteer school teacher in Cagayan de Oro City, realized that no other line of work could give her as much sense of fulfillment.

A psychology graduate, also from Ateneo de Manila, Alfonso briefly tried working in the private sector after her JVP year, "but I remained restless inside—as if in search of something."

She later filled that vague yearning by launching Cartwheels, a foundation providing indigenous peoples access to basic learning, from pre-school to adult education.

Direction

Since she put it up in 1999, Cartwheels has built schoolhouses in two barangays in Bukidon while running scholarship programs in Ifugao and Cagayan de Oro. In August, former President Corazon Aquino recognized Alfonso's pet project by naming it among the first recipients of the "People Power People" Award.

In hindsight, Alfonso said she owed her "direction and stamina" to the simple lifestyle she had led as a volunteer. The pocket money provided by the JVP was just enough to cover lodging and basic needs. She recalled getting used to sleeping on the floor of a rented house and being forced to walk rather than take a tricycle just to save cash.

"There was a time I would be down to my last P2, because I never asked for money from my parents then," said Alfonso, who disclosed that she somehow defied them when she joined JVP. "I really had to convince them. It was really what I wanted to do and they had no choice."

A JVP volunteer need not be sent to the boondocks to make a difference. Venus "Bench" Gegrimos landed in a place called the Daang Tubo on the UP-Diliman campus, where she said she had to "agitate" the residents just so they could press their longtime demand for water service.

Gegrimos, 21, a journalism student from Ateneo de Cagayan, said she organized up to 25 households whose pending applications with Manila Water Co. Inc. had been stalled by right-of-way technicalities arising from their failure to be covered by a census in 1992. The residents got their water supply.

Best education

Crissy Guerrrero told the group of students who gathered for the recruitment campaign: "I had the best education to be a corporate leader, but there are things I cannot turn my back on." She was referring to her JVP work in Palawan in the mid-90s helping ethnic groups—the Batak, Tagbanua and Palawan—obtain titles for their ancestral land and implement livelihood, health, and educational projects.

The JVP has served up to 300 communities in the country, but Lopez admits that it's a challenge to measure the program's impact on poverty and social injustice.

"When you see the big picture which is really getting worse, it's really frustrating," he said. "But when you start seeing the faces behind the numbers and you make them your family, you will be inspired to go on no matter how bleak the national situation is. Our secret weapon is the hope we get from our little victories."

4-way presidential race to favor GMA

From page A1

her to gain by default.

The fissure has at once demolished claims of Poe partisans that only he among the known presidential aspirants can "unite" the nation and heal its divisions. This claim takes a hollow ring when the question is asked: If Poe can't unite the opposition, how can he unite a more complex organ than the nation?

Contradictions like the above appear when too much is claimed for an unknown political entity whose merits are apparent to only his sponsors inside the LDP, where he is still an outsider, and which is mesmerized by the mirage of "winnability."

Angara's group in the LDP expelled Lacson from the opposition's selection process after a faction in the LDP nominated late last week Lacson as the party's official candidate. Angara, asserting his party's leadership prerogatives, summarily dismissed the nomination as "unauthorized" and "illegal," thereby confirming the factional break-up of the LDP.

New coalition

A new opposition coalition is being formed, the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, composed of ousted President Joseph Estrada's Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), the minuscule PDP, and possibly a rump of Eduardo Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition. All the corrosive elements of fission are found in this new coalition.

Estrada is torn between his loyalty to Poe and Lacson, who is determined to push his presidential bid and to defy Angara's expulsion edict and is unwilling to step down to make way for Poe.

Estrada and Angara share the cynical political view that the main consideration for backing Poe is "winnability."

When asked about the possibility of Poe making way for Lacson, Estrada, without being embarrassed, said: "What we are talking about here is 'winnability,'" although he also said the unity of the opposition was "necessary in order to defeat the administration."

So, none in the opposition, including Angara and much less Poe, has talked about programs, except Lacson who has laid his presidential bid on the line on the issue of a tough crackdown on rising incidence of kidnappings with ransom and murder by crime syndicates victimizing wealthy members of the Chinese-Filipino community.

The push by the Angara faction for Poe is driven by no other motivation than "winnability," revealing that the opposition's political strategy is based on cynicism that is nothing less than a plain power grab that derogates the important function of an opposition as an alternative to the sitting regime it seeks to replace.

The perception of Poe's "winnability" is founded on illusion that as a popular film actor, box-office popularity can translate into votes that will swamp his rivals in 2004.

Public opinion polls taken over the past few months have shown that while Poe has received more votes in the survey than Ms Macapagal, but he has tailed Sen. Noli de Castro and Raul Roco, except in the November survey of the Social Weather Stations, where he squeaked past De Castro—a fluke that has not been satisfactorily accounted for by the pollsters.

Poe will have to show that the deviation from the static position he had held in previous surveys is sustainable.

Nonsense

Poe's sponsors in the LDP have to work harder to show that they have something more to offer than the illusion of "winnability" and his statement that he can offer the nation "common sense," which is only a short step away from nonsense.

The opposition has to show that it is not peddling to the nation damaged goods or defective merchandise, and this is exactly what the voters of this country will get if Poe continues to evade scrutiny of what he stands for.

Historically, a four-cornered or even a three-cornered election has favored an incumbent. Moreover, sitting presidents have advantages of incumbency, including organization, exposure to the voters, and access to campaign resources, which should not be dismissed out of hand.

In the 1957 election, Carlos P. Garcia of the Nacionalista Party topped the polls in a field of four candidates. Jose Yulo of the Liberal Party came in second, Manuel Manahan of the Progressive Party of the Philippines polled third, and Claro M. Recto of the nationalist wing of the NP polled last.

In the 1961 election, Ferdinand Marcos of the NP won by a landslide, and the third force candidate, Raul Manglapus of the Progressive Party of the Philippines, was swept out, running third.

In the post-Marcos dictatorship elections, Fidel V. Ramos of the Lakas-NUCD, won only 24 percent of the vote. He benefited, fractionally, from the splintering of the votes among six other candidates.

In 1998, Estrada won with nearly 40 percent of the vote in a field of 10 rivals, in which he did not run against an incumbent. (Ramos was disqualified from running for a second term.) Estrada was running far ahead in the surveys then.

In a splintered vote, among three other rivals, Ms Macapagal has the edge. That's the political reality of the crystallizing scenario.

Poe is not far ahead of anyone as far as recent surveys indicate. His edge is precarious over De Castro and Roco and the surveys show he has enormous vulnerability and he can be beaten.

His "winnability" is based on nothing more solid than a bubble that can burst in his face as soon as it collides with the rough edges of reality.

This perception has so deluded the promoters of Poe in the fractured opposition that it has made them so arrogant and complacent that they have come to believe that they can win the election riding on a split and crippled machine.

The opposition needs every piece of vote, including those of Lacson, whom the pro-Poe faction has summarily expelled from the opposition.

Poe has become the opposition's heavy baggage, its self-created nemesis.

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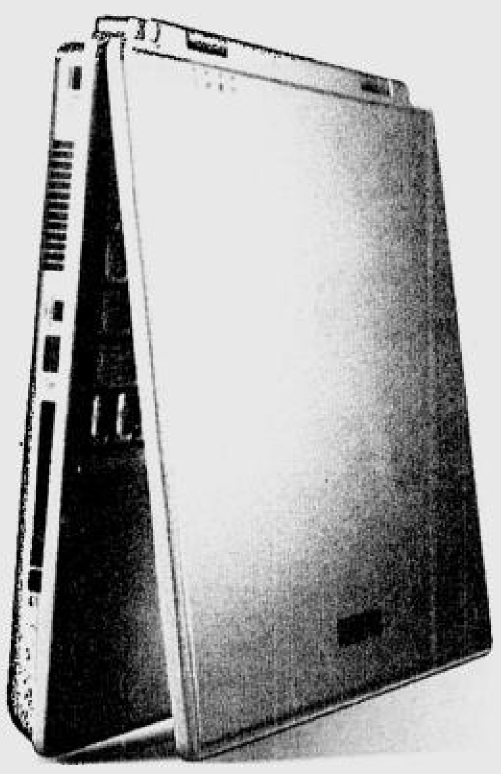

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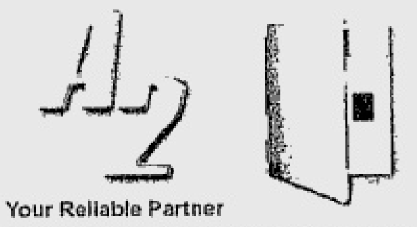

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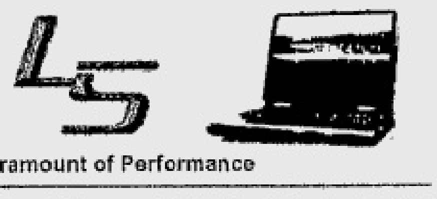

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 8, 2003
Immaculate Conception

1st Reading: Gen 3:9-15, 20
2nd Reading: Eph 1:3-6, 11-12
Gospel: Lk 1:26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; he will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be if I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Commentary

Salvation history was for a moment pending on the "yes" of this woman. It is the clearest proof of God's respect for his creation. He has given us freedom. Therefore, nothing is done without our consent. But at the same time we are asked to be responsible for the gift received. When Mary says "Let it be done," she is just using her freedom to receive in her heart God's gift. In the midst of our sins, there is something pure in all of us: God's gift of freedom. Today in Mary's mirror we can learn how to use it and make it grow and mature for our own good.

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Bazaar draws out talents of people with disabilities

From page A1

Velez has a stall at the Virra Mall in Greenhills, but the bazaar holds a special place in her heart. Velez is a deaf-mute entrepreneur who launched her own line of products in April last year after the garments factory she worked in closed down. Her products include delicately made bags, wallets and pillow cases.

She received start-up capital from the National Council for Persons With Disabilities. Her small business, which thrives on orders from a furniture company, helps support her family. Velez is married to a deaf-mute and has two able daughters.

"This is an opportunity to show other people that the disabled have talents, that they should not be hidden and should be allowed to grow," says Josephine Barbin, coordinator of the AMO-PDM.

Special education teacher Victoria Silva knows this only too well. She joined the bazaar, selling P65 plastic dispensers, stuffed toys, clocks, picture frames, and ceramic displays made by her students at the Isaac Lopez Elementary School in Mandaluyong.

Silva, who has devoted 29 years to teaching multi-handicapped children, spends her own money to buy raw materials that her students can work on.

Some of her 24 students collected yesterday aluminum cans and plastic bottles of mineral water, which they will sell to junk shops. The proceeds will be used to buy Silva's class cutters and other items for handicrafts.

But more than the lack of resources in school, her biggest challenge is to make the students go to class everyday because daily transportation and meal allowances are too much for the parents.

Tiny Big Special School

The crinkles, marshmallow crispies and butterscotch brownies sold for P60 by the Tiny Big Special School were the fulfillment of the hope of yet another special education teacher.

Corazon Colendrino, a hearing impaired teacher, had initially wanted to put up a baking school for able persons. But a look at her autistic nephew changed her mind. She is now teaching basic and advanced cooking and baking to five special students since she opened the Tiny Big Special School in June.

Her class baked snacks for some 500 people during the convention of the Autism Society of the Philippines in October. Her students are also able to bake character cakes.

The AMO-PDM started the Christmas tradition for PWDs in 2000 when retired Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin ordered the expansion of the ministry for the deaf to all persons with all kinds of disabilities.

Left out

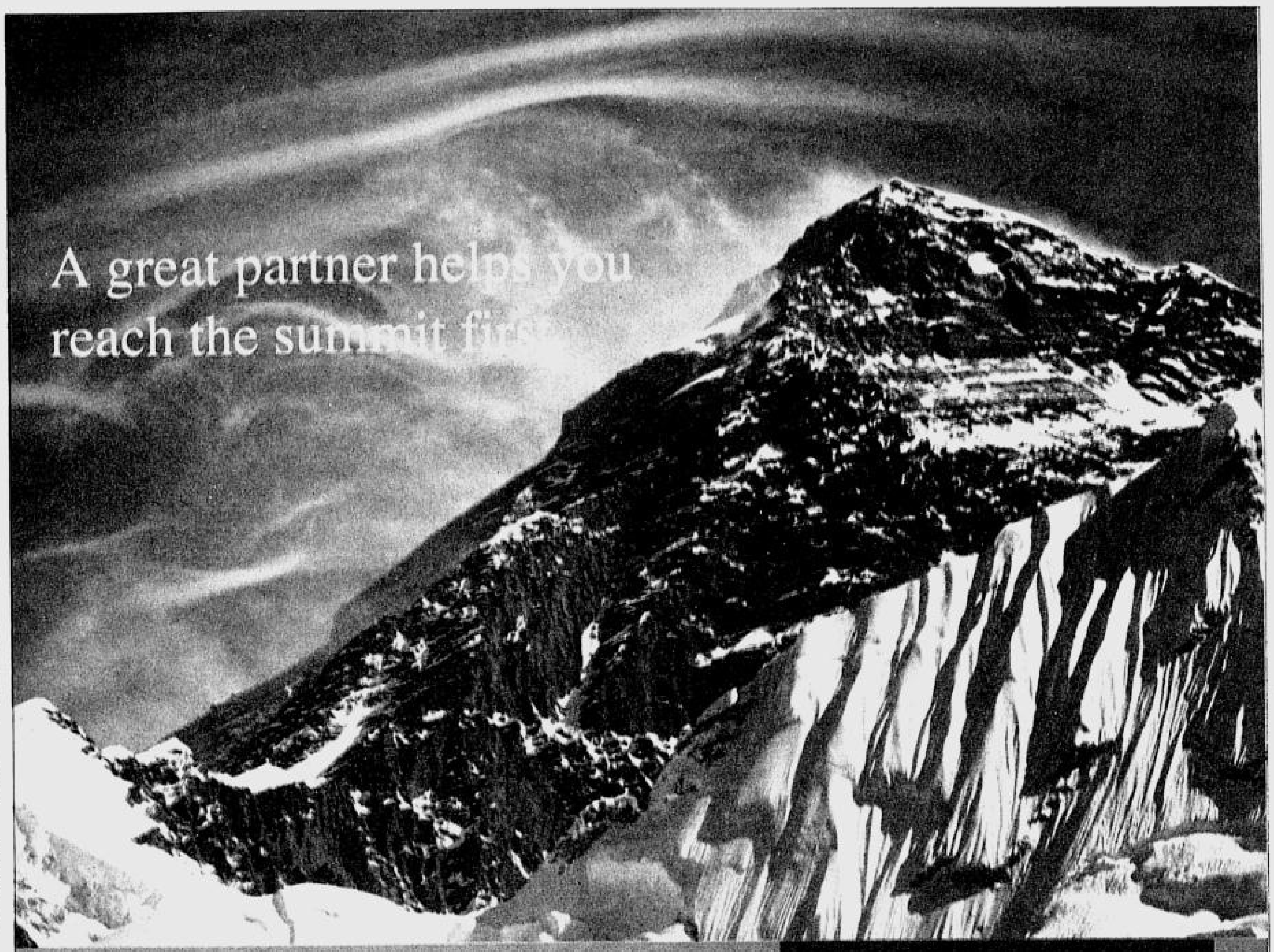
Barbin says the program is meant to "bring back" the PWDs to the church, who rarely go to Sunday Mass because they can not relate to the sacraments.

Christine Feria, a volunteer at the AMO-PDM along with her mother and sisters, says the lack of interpreters in parishes indicates the need to reach out to PWDs. "They often feel left out and ostracized," Barbin says.

But yesterday, the AMO-PDM went out of their way to accommodate the spiritual needs of the PWDs. The Mass, officiated by Bishop Socrates Villegas, was interpreted for the deaf, and some confessions were done in sign language as well. Villegas gave a general absolution for the sins of those who attended the PWD party.

Activities, such as storytelling, face painting, art contests, clay-making and computer demonstration, were conducted for the blind. Inspirational talks and lectures for parents and caregivers were also held to teach families of PWDs how to handle special children.

Lunch was followed by an exchange gift, with all participants bringing something worth P50. "We want to teach them not just to take and take, but to know what it's like to give," Barbin says.



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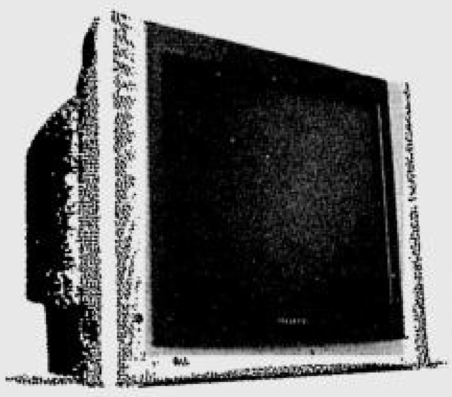

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Cops framed me, says No. 4 'most wanted'

From page A1

number on him.

Allan Niegas told the INQUIRER he had been framed by the police.

Contrary to assertions by Malacañang, Niegas said he was not arrested but had surrendered, and that he himself was a kidnap victim.

He also denied involvement in any kidnapping.

Chief Supt. Dionisio Coloma Jr., police director in Eastern Visayas, brushed off Niegas' claim, saying his denial was to be expected.

Niegas said he had surrendered to Coloma on Thursday in his hometown of Capoocan, Leyte, after he was convinced to do so by his father Bonifacio.

NIEGAS

Niegas said he himself was a one-time kidnap victim and had been falsely accused of involvement in the kidnapping of his employer's child.

P1-M reward

He claimed he went into hiding for fear of his life, particularly after a P1-million reward was offered for his capture, dead or alive. He said he was surprised and alarmed when he learned he had been listed as one of the country's most wanted persons.

Niegas has a warrant of arrest issued by Judge Edwin Sorongon of the Mandaluyong Regional Trial Court on charges of kidnapping.

Niegas said that sometime in November 2002, he was "kidnapped" by a group of armed men. The main target of the group, he said, was the 2-year-old son of his employer, John.

He said he was working as a company driver of Smart Move, a Makati City-based business engaged in educational and office supplies.

Ransom paid

"We were released by them (the armed group) after more than one month in captivity. I think the family paid a ransom, that's the reason why we were released," he said.

He claimed that on the day they were "kidnapped" by the group, he was cleaning his employer's vehicle at around 7 a.m. when a man armed with a .45-cal. pistol approached him and poked the gun at him.

He said he was ordered to get the boy, which he followed because he feared for his own life. He claimed they were loaded into a waiting vehicle, blindfolded and brought to an unknown place.

"I am not a member of their group. That is why I was surprised when I learned that I was included on that (wanted) list," he said.

He claimed that after the child's family paid the ransom, the kidnappers freed him and the boy.

Niegas said he returned to Capoocan after he was freed. There, he said, he worked as a laborer on a flood control project of Rep. Trinidad Apostol of the second congressional district.

But Coloma belittled Niegas' claim. He said the police learned of the suspect's whereabouts from an informant. On Wednesday, he said, they went to Capoocan to arrest Niegas. He surrendered the following day.

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Comelec told: Show us you can do it

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A senator yesterday urged the Commission on Elections to conduct mock elections to prove it is ready to conduct nationwide computerized polls next year.

Opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said Saturday the Comelec should demonstrate through mock polls that the automatic counting of votes and electronic transmission of election results to the Comelec head office would work.

Some lawmakers had opposed the nationwide computerized counting of ballots in the 2004 elections because the Comelec is allegedly ill-prepared to do the job.

"The Comelec must ensure the orderly and peaceful conduct of the 2004 election. Failure of election will give military adventurists and their civilian supporters a justification to destroy our democracy," Biazon said.

On Saturday, the Comelec showed its automated counting machines to Cabinet officials and civil society groups in a forum to solicit support for its bid to conduct nationwide computerized elections in May.

Comelec officials fear that "hybrid elections," which would entail automated polls in selected areas and manual in others, would still push through instead of computerized elections nationwide after Congress approved a joint resolution limiting computerized elections to selected areas.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos said the joint resolution amending the Election Automation Law of 1997 would take effect unless vetoed by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

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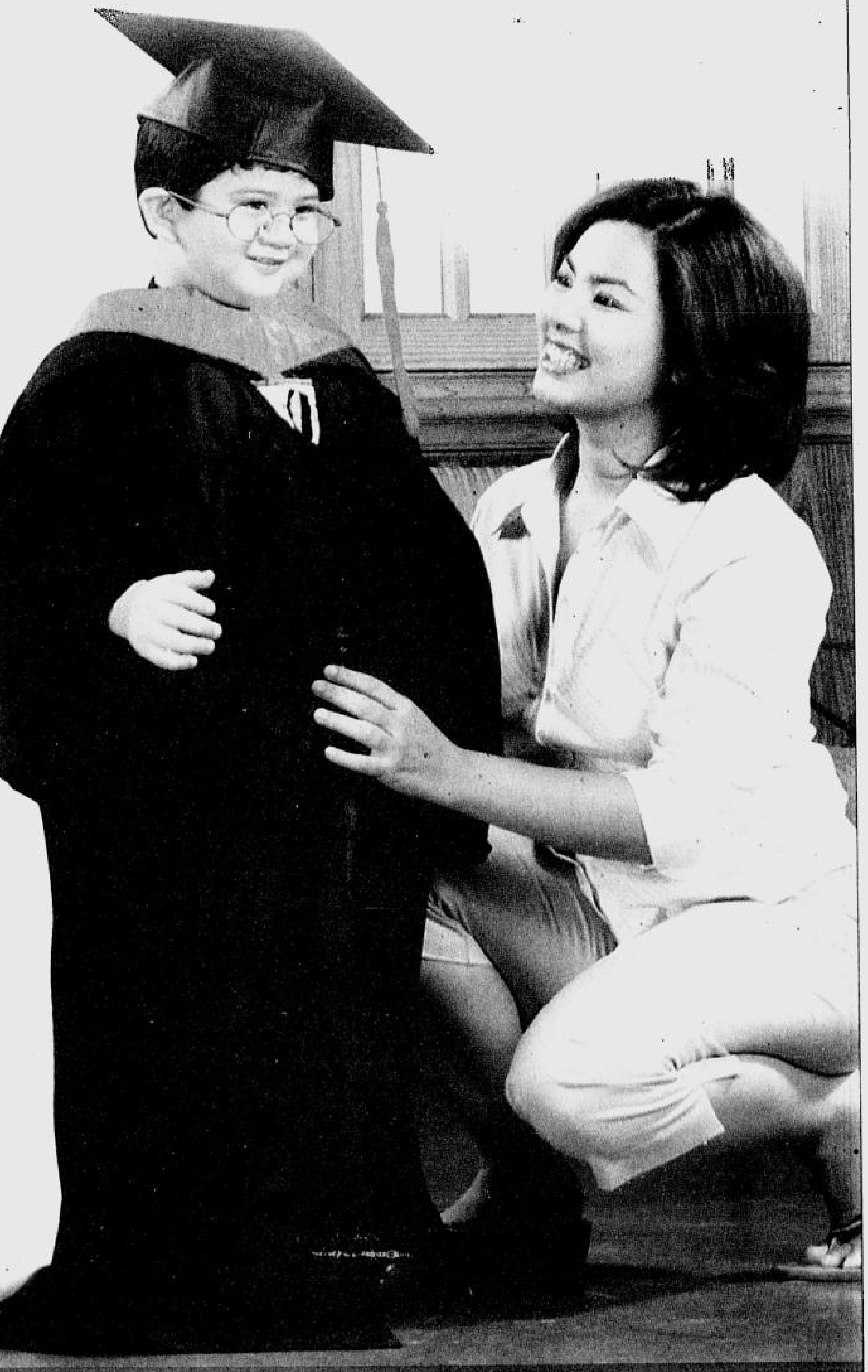

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Visit 'JI' camps, MILF dares gov't execs

SULTAN KUDARAT, Maguindanao—Fed up with persistent reports linking them to the Jemaah Islamiyaah regional terror network, leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have dared government representatives to come up and see for themselves if the MILF was letting JI operatives use its training camps in Lanao del Sur.

"All of you are welcome, see for yourselves," said Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita had earlier said the brother of slain Indonesian terrorist Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi was one of those training MILF fighters in the camps.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said that unless the authorities could present evidence of a JI link, they should stop making statements "based on dubious sources" that only serve to threaten the peace talks between the government and the MILF.

Jaafar maintained the MILF was not harboring terrorists.

"We are always accused of doing (things that) we do not even think of," he said. "This is dangerous because it puts us in a bad light before the international community and might even cause the collapse of the peace talks."

Kabalu said the government was apparently trying to find a scapegoat for its failure to stop terrorism.

Like Jaafar, Kabalu invited government officials to come to the alleged camp sites on Mount Kararao on the border of Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur.

Kabalu said the authorities have found in the JI the justification for continued military action against the MILF.

The peace talks between the government and the MILF are scheduled to resume in January, with Malaysia acting as third-party host.

Presidential adviser on the peace process Teresita Deles said the government was awaiting the final schedule for the talks set in Kuala Lumpur. *Edwin O. Fernandez with Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Canada renews advisory

CANADA has reiterated its travel advisory for the Philippines due to continuing threats of terrorism and kidnappings.

The advisory was posted on Dec. 6 on Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's website. It revised portions of an advisory issued on Oct. 20.

"Canadians traveling throughout the Philippines should be vigilant and maintain a high level of security awareness due to the continuous threat of kidnappings, bombings and other violent incidents," the advisory said. *Jerome Aning*

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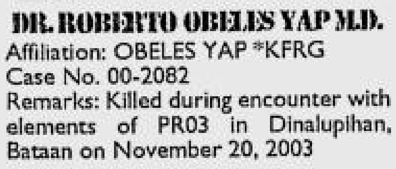
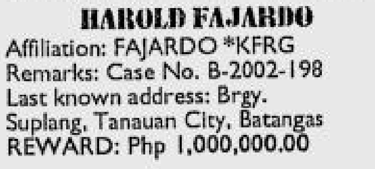
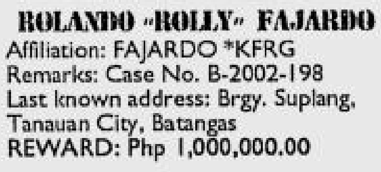


DR. ROBERTO OBELES YAP M.D.
Affiliation: OBELES YAP *KFRG
Case No. 00-2082
Remarks: Killed during encounter with elements of PR03 in Dinalupihan, Bataan on November 20, 2003



HAROLD FAJARDO
Affiliation: FAJARDO *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. B-2002-198
Last known address: Brgy. Suplang, Tanauan City, Batangas
REWARD: Php 1,000,000.00



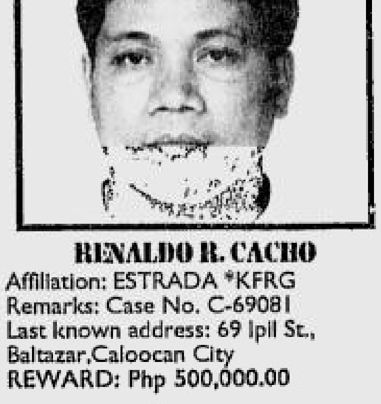
ROLANDO "ROLLY" FAJARDO
Affiliation: FAJARDO *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. B-2002-198
Last known address: Brgy. Suplang, Tanauan City, Batangas
REWARD: Php 1,000,000.00

ALLAN NIEGAS
Affiliation: ALLAN NIEGAS *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. MC-03-881-FC-H
Last known address: Antipolo City
REWARD: Php 1,000,000.00

VILMOR CATAMCO
Affiliation: FAJARDO GROUP
Remarks: Case No. Q-02106574
Last known address: Iloilo City
REWARD: Php 900,000.00

DR. EDDIE TRINIDAD
Affiliation: FAJARDO *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. B-2002-198
Last known address: Sta. Isabela, Penafrancia,Cupang, Antipolo City, Tanauan, Batangas
REWARD: Php 850,000.00

JOSE LIM "JACK" ARNUCO
Affiliation: PEGARIDO *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. Q-02-106574
Last known address: ATO Compound, Fort Bonifacio,Makati City
REWARD: Php 750,000.00



RENALDO R. CACHO
Affiliation: ESTRADA *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. C-69081
Last known address: 69 Ipil St., Baltazar,Caloocan City
REWARD: Php 500,000.00

FELICIANO LAYGO
Affiliation:FELICIANO LAYGO *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. Q-99-87470
Last known address: Lipa,Batangas Lagalag,Tiaong,Quezon
REWARD: Php 500,000.00

JAIME MOOG
Affiliation:FELICIANO LAYGO *KFRG
Remarks: Case No. Q-99-87470
Last known address: Lipa,Batangas Paisa,Tiaong,Quezon
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Sign emissions pact, RP urges Russia

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES has joined other countries in urging Russia to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, which aims to cut emissions of gases that cause global warming.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said the Kyoto Protocol could collapse without Moscow's backing. The treaty requires ratification by countries responsible for 55 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

"It is our hope that in spite of the conflicting signals on its intentions, Russia will eventually join this important environmental agreement," Ople said.

So far, countries accounting for 44 percent of the emissions, including the Philippines, have signed up. Russia, which emits 17 percent of "greenhouse" gases, has the casting vote.

The United States—the world's top polluter, being responsible for 36 percent of the emissions—earlier withdrew from the protocol, saying the treaty would harm the US economy as it requires major industrialized countries to reduce emissions to below 1990 levels.

"A number of industrial countries are also closely watching Russia's decision," Ople said. "We regret that some industrialized countries continue to refuse to join the agreement, while some have expressed second thoughts."

On Tuesday, a top Kremlin economic adviser said Russia would not approve the pact in its present form. He was contradicted two days later by a deputy economic minister who said the treaty would be sent next year to the Russian parliament for approval.

Ople said ministers and experts from around the world who are currently meeting in Milan, Italy for the United Nations conference on climate change would find ways to encourage all states to become a party to the protocol.

RP glad for vets' bills, but ...

FOREIGN Secretary Blas Ople is happy the US Congress recently passed two bills radically improving benefits for Filipino World War II veterans who are in the United States, but said that until there was full recognition and equality for all veterans, "the fight is far from over."

"We are thankful for the effort and express the hope that these are initial steps toward the passage soon of bills that would restore full equity to our veterans, whether they are US residents or otherwise," Ople said.

Two bills recently passed by the US Congress would provide over $19 million a year for health care for 8,000 Filipino veterans, and equitable benefits and burial rights to 100 New Philippine Scouts and their widows, living in the US.

Ople said the Philippines would continue to push for US legislation that "will finally put an end to the profound inequality." *Jerome Aning*

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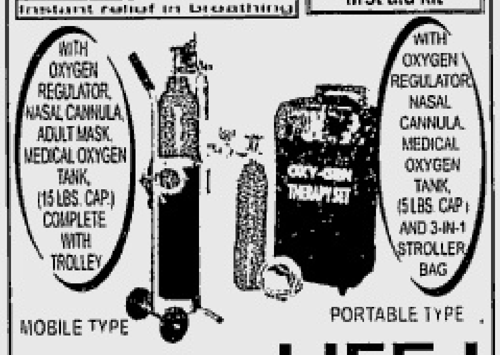

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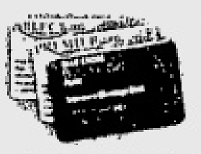

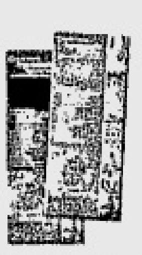

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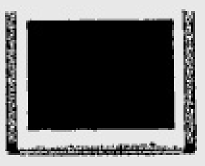

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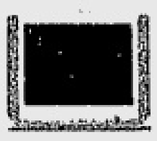

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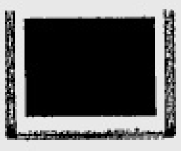

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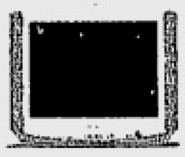

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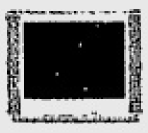

2011 Classic

For want of roads, tillers turn to pot

MARIJUANA is replacing vegetables as the cash crop of choice in some parts of the Cordillera due to the lack of farm-to-market roads.

Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chiongalao said his constituents have taken to cultivating marijuana simply because it pays more than all the vegetables they could carry on their backs, which is how local farmers get their produce to market.

"How do you expect them to plant vegetables when they have to walk [several] kilometers just to earn less than P1,000 at the end of the day?" Chiangalao said.

In contrast, a compacted block of marijuana commands more than P1,000, he said.

Chiongalao noted that while his province has been the subject of multi-million-peso government campaigns promoting its world-famous rice terraces, "we are actually shortchanged in terms of development."

Volt Contreras

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US air strike kills 9 Afghan children

KABUL, Afghanistan—A US air strike apparently killed nine children and a suspected militant in eastern Afghanistan, a spokesperson said Sunday.

An American A-10 aircraft struck a site south of Ghazni, 160 km southwest of the capital, Kabul, where a "known terrorist" was believed to be hiding at about 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Army Maj. Christopher E. West told The Associated Press.

"At the time we initiated the attack, we did not know there were children nearby," he said.

The target was a suspected militant believed responsible for the killing in October of two foreign contractors who were working on an Afghan road, West said. However, he did not identify the contractors and had no information about their deaths.

On Saturday, suspected Taliban kidnapped two Indian engineers working on the road. Taliban recently freed a Turkish engineer from the project after a month in captivity.

West said US troops collected "extensive intelligence over an extended period of time" and located the suspect targeted in Saturday's strike at an "isolated, rural site."

"Following the attack, ground coalition forces searching the area found the bodies of both the intended target and those of nine children nearby," he said Sunday.

The military was sending a team of investigators to the site to determine if US forces were at fault, West said.

He said other houses were near the area attacked Saturday, but the aircraft did not strike them.

Coalition forces "will make every effort to assist the families of these innocent casualties and determine the cause of the civilian deaths," West said from the US headquarters in Bagram.

"We regret the loss of any innocent life and we follow stringent rules of engagement to specifically avoid this type of incident while continuing to target terrorists who threaten the future of Afghanistan," West said.

Jawaid Khan, the Ghazni governor's secretary, said that eight children and two men were killed—but not the intended target, Mullah Wazir, whom he said was a commander under the Taliban regime.

"The Americans wanted to bomb Mullah Wazir, but they bombed a different house," Khan told the AP.

"The people there are very afraid. They have no idea why the Americans bombed their village," Khan said.

Ghazni governor's spokesperson, Ahmad Zia Masood, said that Wazir had fired at US helicopters on Friday.

Masood said it was unclear if the 10 victims were Wazir and his family or their neighbors.

He said the attack took place at Atla village, just north of where the two Indian road engineers were kidnapped.

The engineers, who were not identified, were working for an Indian contractor helping resurface part of the Kabul-Kandahar road, a reconstruction project mainly funded by the United States. The road was to be officially opened later this month.

Taliban attacks have plagued the flagship project. Four construction workers were killed at the end of August, and de-mining operations along the road were suspended last month after a carjacking. A Turkish engineer was abducted along the road Oct. 30, and released after one month. *AP*

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Russians vote in key parliamentary election

MOSCOW—Russians went to the polls to elect a new parliament Sunday in a ballot that could squeeze out the liberal opposition and hand President Vladimir Putin a majority for his United Russia party.

Polls opened in the capital Moscow, the country's economic heart and largest city, at 8 a.m., some nine hours after voting had begun in the easternmost of Russia's 11 time zones in the Far East.

The election will decide the 450 seats of the State Duma, or lower house of parliament. In addition, most of the Russian Federation's 89 regions will choose local representatives, from the mayor of Moscow to the municipal education head in Siberia's Buryatia republic.

Security was tight throughout the country after a massive suicide bomb blamed on Chechen rebels, which killed at least 41 people and injured more than 170 others, went off near the war-torn republic two days before voting day.

The election's main suspense is whether United Russia and its allies will get a two-thirds majority, allowing Putin to change the constitution so he could remain in power beyond 2008, at the end of his likely second term.

The other uncertainty is whether two small liberal parties, Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces (SPS), will make it past the crucial 5-percent barrier to gain a guaranteed share of seats in the Duma.

The main Communist opposition party lags in opinion polls behind United Russia, an alliance of pro-Kremlin factions headed by a close Putin ally, Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov, that dominates the current parliament.

A Kremlin-backed leftist-nationalist party, Motherland, has made steady gains in recent weeks, helped by coverage on state-controlled national television, and could edge past both Yabloko and SPS. *AFP*

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Ebadi to cast off headscarf again

TEHRAN—Nobel Peace Prize winner Shirin Ebadi is to cast off her headscarf when she goes to Oslo this week to formally receive her award, with the laureate shrugging off the fact that such a move will only strengthen hardline opposition to her campaign for the rights of women, children and dissidents.

"I will not be wearing the hejab," Ebadi said. "My actions have always irritated some people, but that is not important."

"I want Iranian women to be free to wear or not wear the hejab," she said of the Islamic dress code enforced in the Islamic republic since the 1979 revolution and a symbol seized upon by many feminist activists.

After being informed of her win in October, she gave a press conference without a headscarf—something that drew fierce criticism from hardliners here. In theory, such an act of defiance can be pursued by the courts in Iran.

Ebadi, however, did point out that she was opposed to moves in secularist France to ban the veil from schools: "I protest equally against the French government as I do against the Iranian government."

Ebadi, 56, insisted her life "has not changed" since she was awarded the prize in October, although did admit that demands on her time and workload were increasing.

"I try to lead a normal life. I still eat dinner with my family. When I get home, I cut all the telephones," she said. *AFP*

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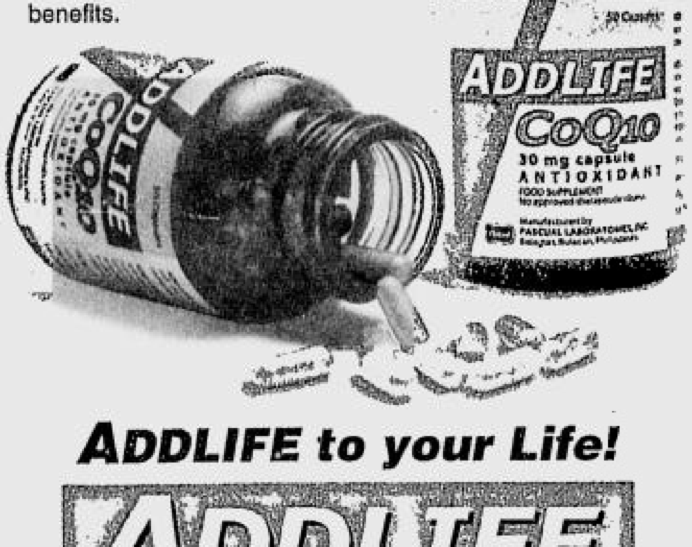

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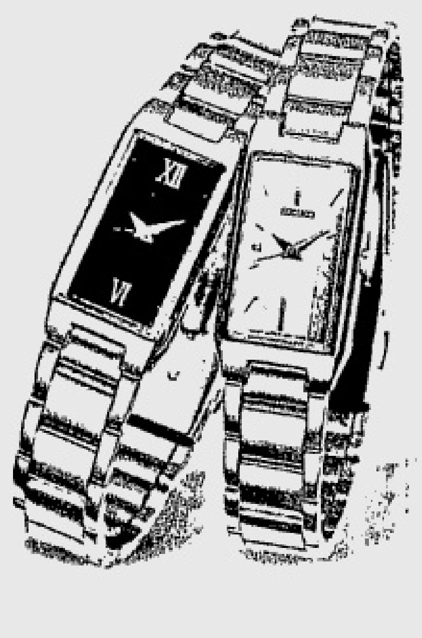

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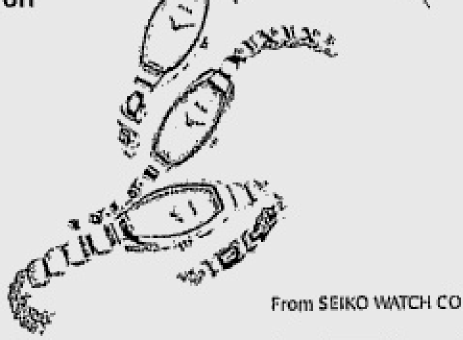
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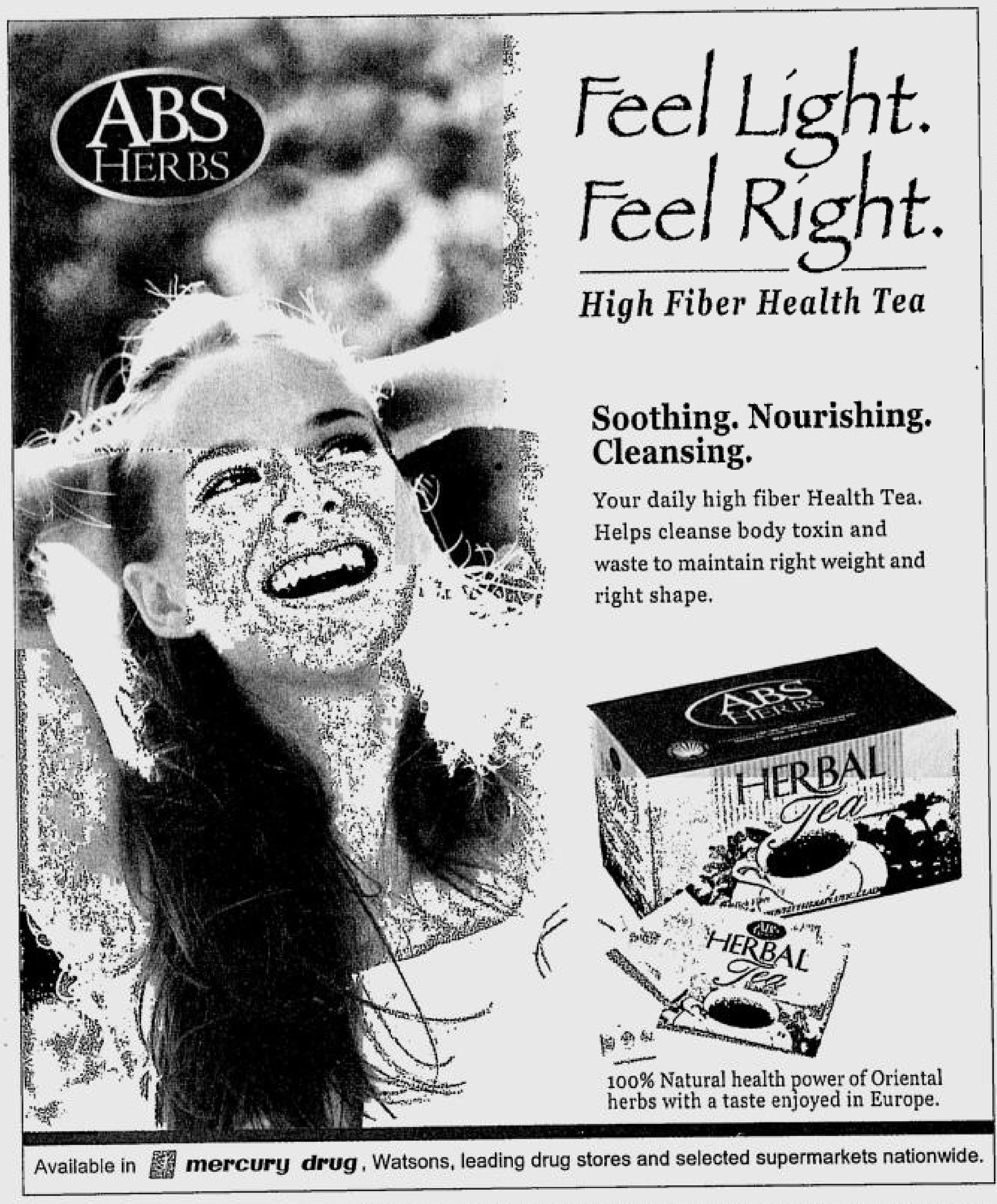

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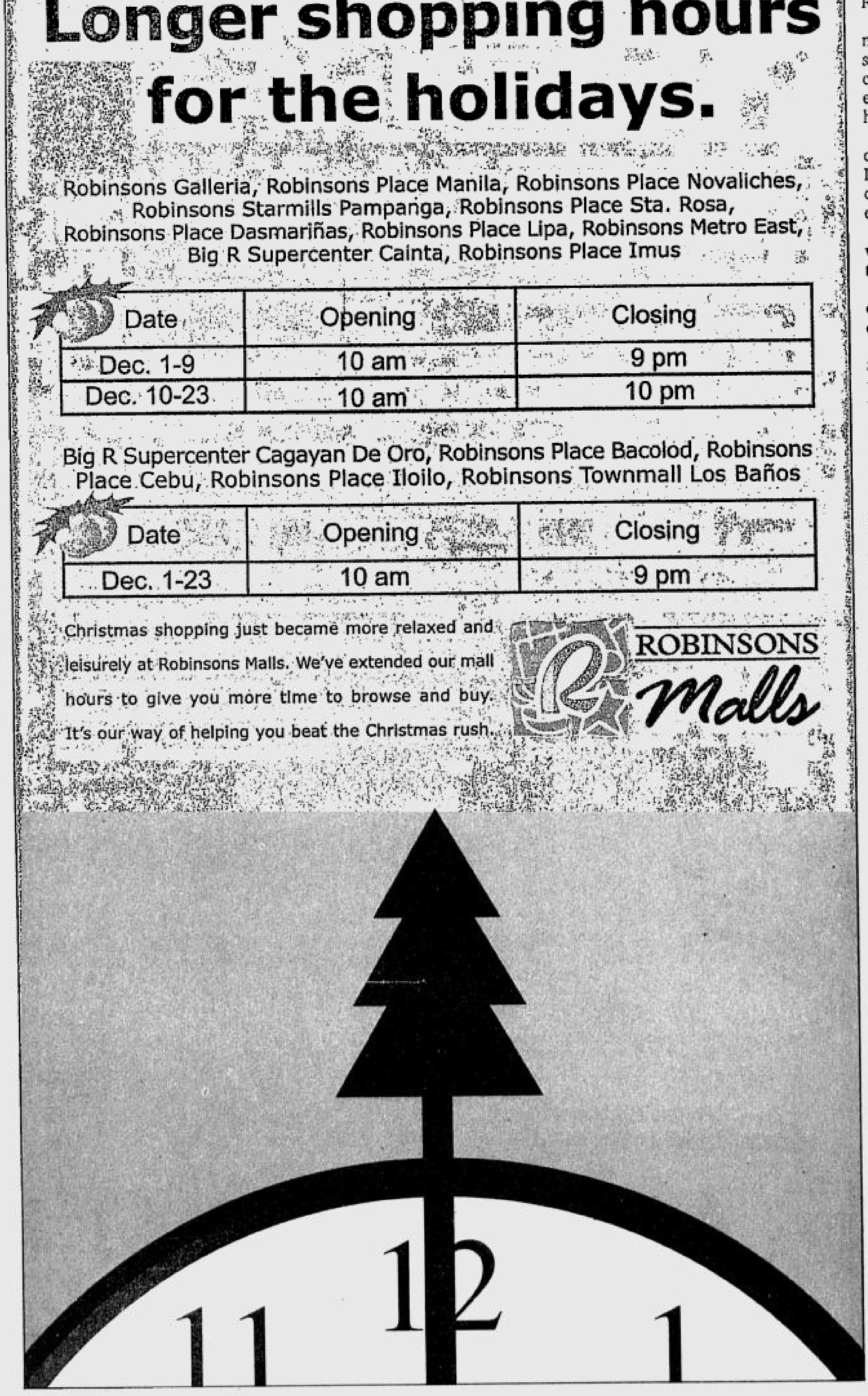

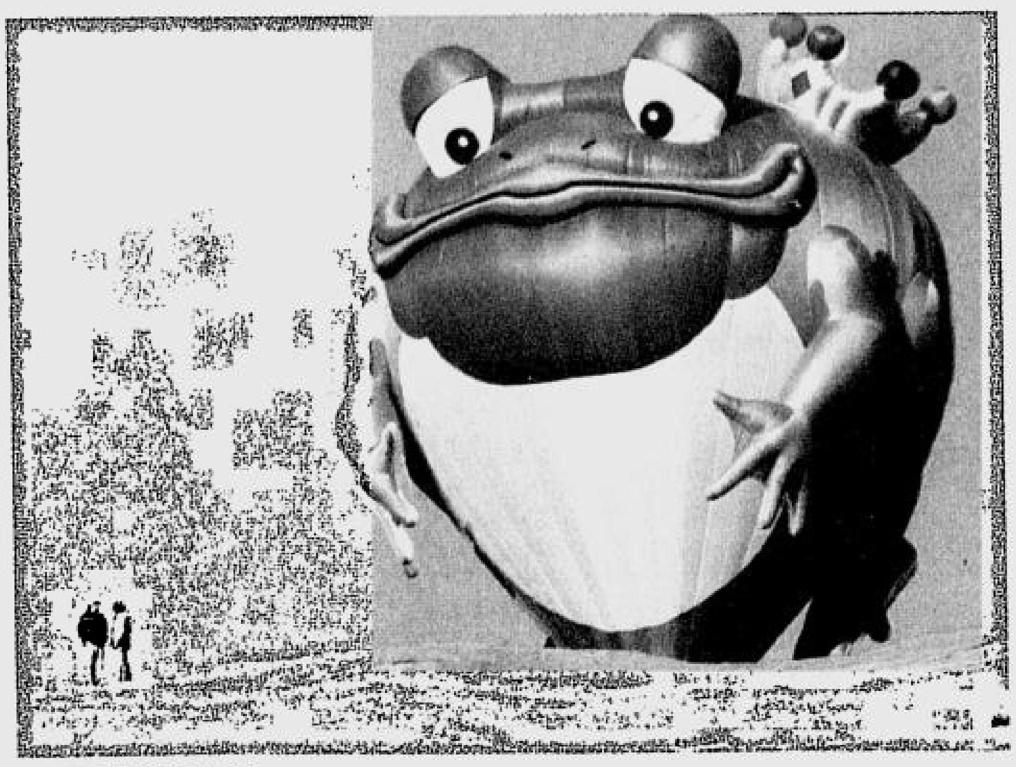

FULL OF HOT AIR
A hot air balloon lifts off during the 23rd Annual Red Rock Balloon Rally at Red Rock State Park Dec. 6 near Gallup, New Mexico. The balloon rally is the world's second largest with some 180 balloons flying into cliff-bound canyons during the three-day event. AFP

Saddam commanding attacks on US forces, say Iraq tribal leaders

BAGHDAD—Saddam Hussein is hiding out west of Baghdad from where he commands the operations against the US occupation of Iraq, a tribal leader and faithful follower of the ousted president told AFP.

"Saddam Hussein is in good health and living in the west of Iraq," said the man who is involved in the struggle and calls himself only Abu Mohammad.

"The Iraqi president is commanding the military operations against the American forces," he said Saturday.

An AFP journalist was introduced to the tribal leader by a Baath politician working to set up a new party to support the resistance.

The politician said Saddam presided over a meeting of "dozens of Baath party cadres" at Ramadi, 100 km west of Baghdad, at iftar, or the end of the daily dawn-to-dusk fast during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.

A dissident Baath figure confirmed the secret meeting saying it took place on Nov. 8, the same day Gen. John Abizaid, commanding officer of US Central Command (Centcom), gathered tribal leaders in Ramadi to try to work out how to halt anti-coalition attacks.

Abu Mohammad disclosed that he met Saddam who, he said, pays unannounced visits to Iraqis. "There is no risk to him in the west because people are defending him and will never betray him," the tribal leader claimed.

Washington is offering a $25-million reward for information leading to the capture of the president who was overthrown in April.

Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the commander of US forces in Iraq, said Saturday that Saddam's role remained unclear.

"We have not established conclusively that Saddam has established command and control," he told reporters travelling with US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld.

"But we are going on the assumption that he is in the country, that he is moving around, and that's what we're pursuing," he said.

However, Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani has said that Saddam was "behind the attacks and finances them."

US forces have concentrated their hunt for Saddam on Tikrit, the ex-president's hometown and support base, and the Sunni belt north and west of the capital.

They have also gone after Saddam's number two Izzat Ibrahim, offering a reward of $10 million.

But Abu Mohammad said Ibrahim was "very sick and has to have blood transfusions regularly." Arab newspapers have reported that Ibrahim has leukemia.

The tribal chief said Saddam believed "the war is continuing since there has been no surrender and President (George W.) Bush announced himself that major military operations were over but not the war."

"The operations are not centralized," he explained. "Saddam Hussein gives instructions and those who must carry them out find the means to do so."

Abu Mohammad admitted that the guerrilla campaign was still being waged at a low level with rockets and shells but "no sophisticated weapons."

Saddam had given orders to "fight against those who can bring comfort to the occupation," he said.

"We understand the economic reasons why people" work with the Americans, "but it is a question of priority and there is no price on the liberation of the country." Questioned about Friday's attack near Baghdad's Samarai mosque that killed one US soldier but also four Iraqis and left a dozen other Iraqis wounded, Abu Mohammad replied: "Where should we strike? It's true Iraqi deaths hurt us but it is a question of priorities."

The tribal leader said Baath loyalists were fighting in the governorates of Anbar, to the west, Diyala in the northeast, Baghdad, and Salahadin, Tamim and Nineveh in the north.

"The weapons and the finances are Iraqi and the vast majority of those who carry out the orders are also Iraqi. The Arab volunteers are very small in number," he added.

US commanders told reporters Saturday there was no tangible evidence of either Saddam or a national organization directing the cells.

"There are some indications of intent. There may be some financing that is coming from high levels," said Sanchez. *AFP*

Delayed mail saves woman from snake bite

DHAKA—A delayed gift for the Muslim Eid al-Fitr festival may have saved a Bangladeshi woman from a nasty surprise since the package contained a live poisonous snake, a report said Sunday.

The present was sent to Shamima Nasreen Liya at a shop in the southwestern Gopalganj town, the mass circulation Daily Ittefaq newspaper said.

The shop had closed for the Eid festival, which was celebrated on Nov. 26, and the courier company, fearing the contents of the package might rot, opened it up.

They found a 23-centimeter (nine-inch) long snake, believed to be poisonous, and a note saying "Belated Eid greetings. Shaitan Group." *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Italians protest against pension reform

ROME—Hundreds of thousands of Italians took to the streets of Rome on Saturday in a massive show of force against controversial plans by the government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to drastically reform the pension system. Labor unions who organized the demonstration claimed well over a million people participated, while the normally conservative police headquarters made an initial, unofficial, estimate of the crowd at between 200,000 and 250,000. Millions of Italian workers have already observed a four-hour general strike in October against the reform, and unions are threatening a long campaign. Berlusconi went on public television last September to defend the reform, which he says must be introduced by 2008 to cope with demands posed by Europe's oldest population and a ballooning pensions bill. The reforms—adopted by Berlusconi's Cabinet but still to be approved by parliament—would raise to 40 years the period an employee has to pay into the system in order to retire with full benefits. *AFP*

Europe to help North Africa

TUNIS—European countries pledged on Saturday to help North Africa overcome poverty and inequality to help crush the seeds of Islamic extremism. The leaders of 10 European and North African states agreed at an unprecedented summit in Tunis to boost cooperation between the wealthy West and the poorer south in a global war on terror. "It is necessary to bridge the gap of social and economic disparities between the two west Mediterranean shores," said the Tunis Declaration. It called for strengthening security cooperation between European Union countries—represented at the summit by France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain—and the Arab Maghreb Union. The AMU is made up of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, but has been largely ineffective since its creation in 1989 due to regional rivalries. *Reuters*

3 dead in plane crash in England

LONDON—A prominent French businessman and his wife were among three people killed Saturday after their light aircraft crashed in central England, a source close to his family said. Paul-Louis Halley, 69, one of the main shareholders in French supermarket giant Carrefour, the world's second largest retailer, who was also co-founder of the Promodes fashion group, was killed along with his wife Annick, 63, the source told AFP. According to British police, the single-engine propellor plane which took off earlier in the day from Brussels crashed into a field just meters from a main road while attempting to land at Kidlington airport near the university city of Oxford. *AFP*

Palestinians agree to halt suicide bomb attacks in Israel

CAIRO—Palestinian factions said they had agreed in truce talks in Cairo on Saturday to end suicide bombings in Israel but were divided over whether to halt attacks on Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers on occupied land.

The factions, including the militant Muslim groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad which have led suicide attacks against Israelis, began drafting a final communique that will spell out a unified position of 13 disparate Palestinian factions on a ceasefire with Israel.

Israel rejected the Palestinian position as an inadequate basis for the resumption of peace talks or for a summit between the Israeli and Palestinian prime ministers.

"I would say that such a half-way measure is a non-starter.

What kind of a ceasefire is it when there is no ceasefire and you continue to shoot?" a senior Israeli official told Reuters.

Hamas and four other Damascus-based Islamic and radical groups submitted their draft of the final statement to delegates, leaving out any reference to a ceasefire in the West Bank and Gaza, lands Israel occupied in 1967, officials said.

The mainstream Fatah faction, led by President Yasser Arafat, and other moderate groups, submitted several other drafts, with direct and indirect reference to the ceasefire.

"The drafting committee should finalize a common document later tonight and submit it to the factions for approval on Sunday. But the differences between Fatah and Hamas over the ceasefire issue remain," a senior Palestinian official said.

Egyptian mediators, working through the night with the two parties, failed to bridge the gaps, casting doubt on a successful outcome of the discussions, officials said.

A ceasefire is key to ending three years of tit-for-tat Israeli-Palestinian violence and for resuming implementation of a US-backed "road map" for peace that calls for Palestinian statehood by 2005.

A senior Hamas official said Hamas was showing flexibility by initiating a cessation of attacks on civilians in Israel.

"But we will only accept a ceasefire this time after Israel initiates a total ceasefire. We will not fall into the trap of the previous truce when we adhered to a truce while Israel continued its aggression," he said.

Palestinian militants declared a unilateral truce in June which Israel rejected. It collapsed in August when violence erupted anew.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie arrived in Cairo on Saturday to join the talks but because of the differences will not do so until Sunday when he will attend a final session with Egypt's intelligence chief, Omar Suleiman, who is mediating the ceasefire efforts, a senior Fatah official said. *Reuters*

FAIREST IN THE WORLD Nineteen-year-old Miss Ireland, Rosanna Davison, daughter of singer Chris de Burgh, was crowned Miss World 2003 on Saturday in Communist China's first international beauty pageant, an event that would have once been branded a heretical display of western decadence. AFP

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OPINION

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Death becomes her

EDITORIAL

THE PRESIDENT'S decision to lift the moratorium on the death penalty came less than two weeks after she had issued a statement that seemed like the very fruit of reason. "I am resolved to take all means to deter the commission of heinous crimes and strengthen criminal justice," President Macapagal-Arroyo had said on Nov. 24. "But I must emphasize that the death penalty is not the end-all to heinous crime."

On Friday, however, Ms Macapagal announced the lifting of the moratorium. It was, she said, a difficult decision reluctantly arrived at. "Much as I am averse, as a matter of moral principle, to the taking of human lives in this manner—the President must yield to the higher public interest when dictated by extraordinary circumstances."

She was referring to the recent rash of high-profile kidnappings, dramatized by the brutal, accidental death of Coca-Cola executive Betti Chua Sy. What Ms Macapagal must have meant, however, was that she was under intense pressure from an influential sector of society, at a time when that sector's choice of candidate for President was still conceivably up in the air.

The President talked of other measures that need to be taken to kill the kidnapping scourge, including tougher, preemptive action from the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force and more diligent prosecution by the Department of Justice. But there is no mistaking the true shape of her decision: She is courting the vote of the Chinese-Filipino community, from which sector most kidnap-for-ransom victims come.

And, contrary to her official policy, she is offering the lifting of the moratorium as the final answer to the kidnapping menace.

The administration has justified the President's decision in part by talking about how she as a "devout Catholic" torn between her personal moral code and the national interest "agonized for weeks," and in part by reading a wider meaning into the public outrage. "The pain of victims of heinous crimes has spread all over the national community, and I shall not turn my back against the cry for just retribution under the law," Ms Macapagal said on Friday.

Like other critics, Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales, head of the House Committee on Human Rights, saw the President's decision as politically motivated. "It reflects on her hesitation or her inability to look at this as a question of policy. Is she out to please a particular sector?"

A rhetorical question. The irony is, Ms Macapagal may have pleased the Chinese-Filipino community, but she cannot expect to win their support. Many community leaders are already committed to the presidential campaign of opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a former chief of the Philippine National Police. Others will see the flip-flop of the President's as proof that she does not have what law-and-order candidates ought to have in the first place: not only an iron fist, but a spine of steel.

For them, the comedy of errors that played out in Malacañang over the weekend is more confirmation. On Saturday, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo said, "[The lifting] is only for those convicted of kidnap-for-ransom activities. [For] those who are not kidnappers, we recommend a reprieve."

But yesterday, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye amplified on Romulo's statement. The President will not stay the execution of drug dealers whose death sentence has been affirmed by the Supreme Court, he said. "There are no ifs, ands or buts about it."

He must be joking. The "strong Republic's" position on capital punishment has been nothing but a series of ifs, ands or buts, a hemming and hawing that does not inspire confidence.

The President's embrace of death, this late in the day, is not a sign of strength, but an admission of weakness.

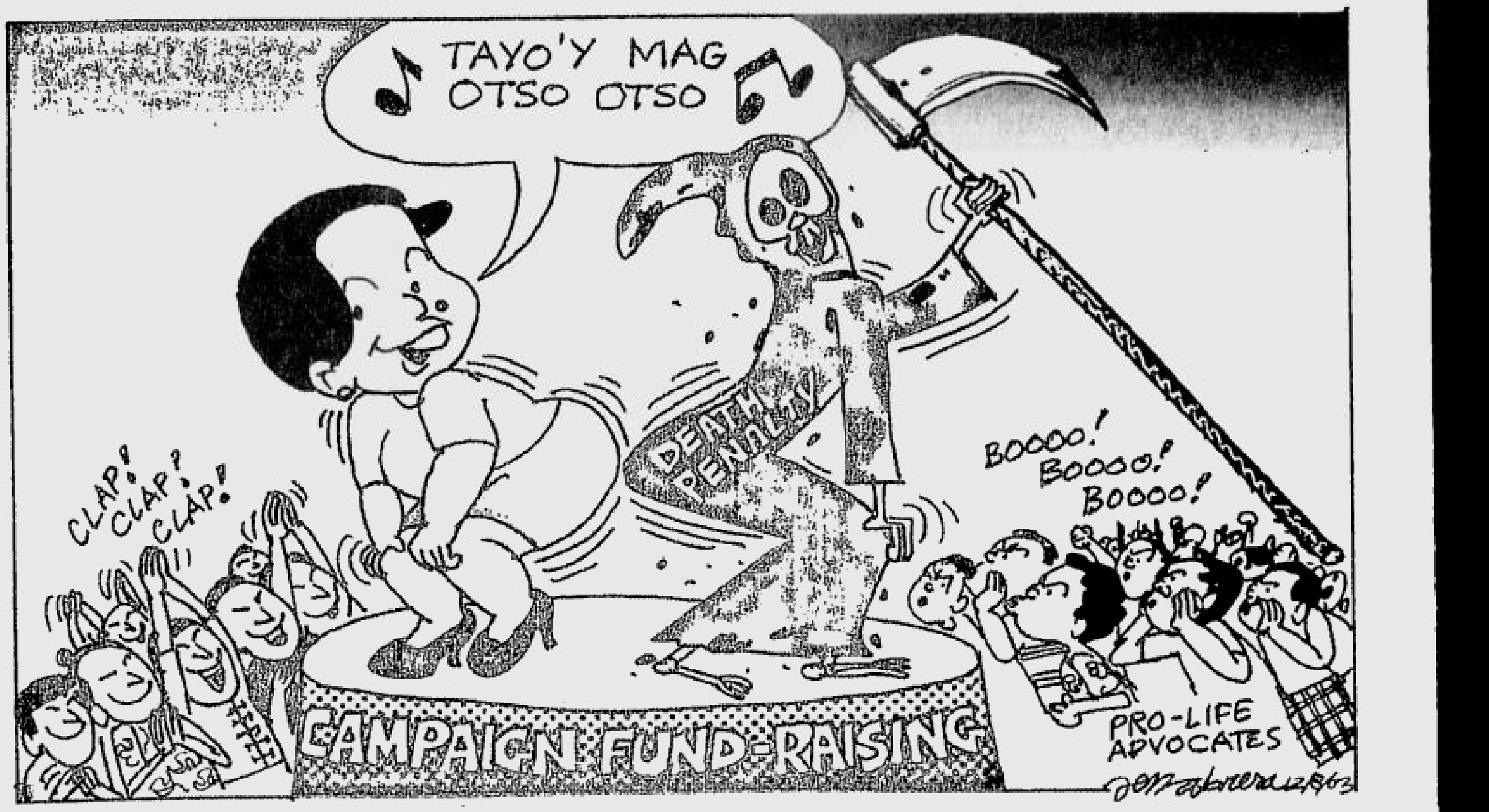
Bush in Iraq

FOREIGN COMMENT

THE AMERICAN troops were pleasantly surprised, of course, to see their commander in chief suddenly in their midst. There is little doubt that the visit will serve as a morale booster for them in a battlefield where their mission is still far from being accomplished.

For the Iraqis, however, the visit will carry a mixed message. That the first American president ever to visit their country should have done so under the cover of darkness and left hurriedly to avoid the thugs and assassins to whom he referred in his speech, merely underscored the abnormality of the scene in Iraq. Arguably, it can be said to have become worse considering that no such secrecy shrouded the earlier visits of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

The Hindustan Times (Delhi, India,)



Payumo's reply on Subic port controversy

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(Continued from last Friday)

THIS is Part 2 of the letter of Chair Felicito Payumo of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority answering the letter of Olongapo Mayor Kate Gordon published early last week, detailing why they are opposing the container cargo terminal inside the SBMA. The Gordons said the new terminal should be built at the Naval Supply Depot compound which, when developed, would be able to handle 1 million TEUs annually. But the total cargo volume of Subic is only 53,000 TEUs. We would need 18 more Subics to fill that capacity, they said.

Wrong again, replied Payumo. That projection was made in 1996 and it has been seven years since then, plus another four years to build up the volume when the two berths will be finished in 2007. The capacity will be only 600,000, not 900,000 TEUs since construction of the third berth is not yet funded and will not happen until 2017-2020. To attract line haulers, a port must have at least two berths. Such ships, mindful of turnaround time, would be hesitant to call on a port with no alternative berth.

The 600,000 TEU capacity projected by Jica, Payumo said, "was premised not only on the potential of Subic but also of Clark and Central and Northern Luzon. The Subic-Clark-Tarlac toll road is meant to decongest Metro Manila of cargo trucks crawling their way to the South Harbor from North and Central Luzon. This is quite unlike the myopic vision for Subic when it was treated as an enclave."

Today's trends are for increasing containerization of cargoes and bigger ships. The Sattler pier now handles only 200-300 TEU vessels, but 70 percent of new ships are in the 3,000 TEU capacity or 10 times bigger. There are now 5,000 TEU ships and orders have been made for 8,000 TEU vessels. When these behemoths set sail, the 3,000 TEU vessels shall be relegated to being feeder vessels. "The shallow waters (less than 12 meters) and the narrow area of the NSD, constrict the maneuverability of bigger ships, as the entrance is the common passage for small private craft leaving and entering the yacht basin and the oil tankers maneuvering in and out of the POL pier nearby," Payumo wrote.

"With the new container port situated in Cubi with more space for maneuvering and adequate draft for bigger vessels, possibilities for inter-Asia transshipment is enhanced. International shipping lines can be enticed to use Subic as alternate ports as other ports in the region may already be congested," Payumo continued.

At present, half of the world's merchant fleet pass through Subic's doorstep but we don't benefit from them. "Only small minds are daunted building a 600,000 TEU capacity port when everyone around us is building. Even Vietnam has started constructing ahead of us, and yes, they also availed of a JBIC loan. Tan Jung Perak in Surabaya is expanding. The Thais thought that building the Laem Chabang port intended to decongest Bangkok is premature. Now it has outpaced Bangkok at 2.5 million TEUs. Qing Dao, now at 3.5 million TEUs, is expanding and projecting a volume of 10 million TEUs by 2010 despite its proximity to Shanghai port. Korea is expanding Guan Yang port despite nearby Busan now at 7 million TEUs, and has built Pyung Teik only two hours from Inchon with 3 million TEUs. Let us not even talk of Singapore and Hong Kong with 17 million TEUs each and Kao Shiung with 7 million TEUs."

There is now a shortage of 14 million TEU port capacity in the Asia-Pacific region. And we are targeting not even 1 million of this potential business. Is that overly ambitious? Payumo asked.

"The Gordons even cited the percentage share drop of Central Luzon to total GDP (gross domestic product). To them, that is a signal to retreat and not to advance. Have they not heard of others who were rewarded by building for the rebound?" Payumo asked.

As for the container port interfering with the operations of the Subic airport, Payumo said it won't. "It is out of the flight path. The 'gooseneck' gantry cranes will not be higher than what the ATO (Air Transportation Office) allows. The access road will be sunken so that container trucks will not be higher than the runway. Not only the ATO but the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) have given clearance to the project. Many airports and seaports are located near each other with minimal or no interference."

As for the environmental concerns, Payumo said the JBIC would not have approved the project if it did not address or mitigate the environmental impacts. It is unavoidable that there will be some environmental disturbances. But sea grass and coral will be replanted similar to sapling and seedling replanting for trees cut when building a road which, Payumo added, "I suppose he (Gordon) did when he cut down 20,000 trees in building the Tipo road and the industrial parks.

"Yes, the Officers' Beach but not All Hands Beach will be closed," Payumo admitted. "No, Olongapo will not be flooded because of the reclamation.

"No, the ECC is not a requirement before commencing the bidding process. It is a requisite for starting construction.

"Yes, there were consultations by the Ecology Department with LGUs and NGOs since 2001. The culmination were the two public hearings called by the DENR on Sept. 15 and Oct. 27 where the resource persons were harassed by a '*hakot*' crowd from Olongapo and Rufo Colayco of the BCDA was punched in the abdomen," Payumo said.

Threat

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I DON'T recall now that Erap had a sidekick in his movies. I recall that he always had a retinue of *barkada* in them, but I don't know that he had a regular one. I do know FPJ did. He was Dencio Padilla who played Sancho Panza to his Don Quixote, offering the same loyalty and comic relief. He was the Everyman all of us could identify with and in whom we saw the Hero with worshipful eyes.

Those are the movies, this is real life. In real life, my worry is that FPJ will not be Daniel Barrion, Asedillio and Ang Panday but the various characters Dencio Padilla played. That is my objection to my friend Teofisto Guingona's assessment that FPJ will not necessarily be like Erap, that he can be tempted to be corrupt like Erap, but he can always refuse to yield to it, like Ang Panday.

My problem there is whether FPJ will be Da King or Da Jester in Malacañang. Ang Panday is a true hero because in the world of *aswangs* and *kapres*, the monsters of the underworld and the villains of the overworld, he knows where he is going, he can overcome with his sword and lead the hapless legions to salvation. FPJ, the citizen and presidential candidate, is not because in the world of the ruthless and the venal, the monsters in the administration and the villains in the opposition, he does not know where he is going, he cannot overcome with his charm and lead the hapless poor to *ginhawa*.

But my even bigger problem is not just who would be Da Jester in Malacañang but who would be Da King. How could Erap escape the clutches of his handlers, if indeed they and not his own greed got him into trouble? He was completely dependent on them. By his own avowal, he knew nothing about running the country. If I recall right, he had more than a hundred advisers, on everything from finance to penance. Can FPJ afford to do any less? Right now, the people around him are the ones who were around Erap, too.

The idea that FPJ will never allow corruption because he is straight presupposes he can spot corruption. It presupposes he knows when the people handling foreign aid, finance, and the military, among others, are fooling around with the money. It presupposes he knows when the people who surrounded Erap and who are surrounding him now, and whose advice he desperately needs, are ripping off the public. Ang Panday only needed Dencio Padilla. FPJ needs Danding Cojuangco. There is a difference. That is the difference between who will be the Da King and who will be Da Clown in Malacañang.

All these remarks of course owe to the Social Weather Stations survey that shows FPJ to be leading the pack—indeed one that was taken before he made his decision to run. I am not at all surprised by it, I've been saying it from the start. You would be crazy, or self-deluded, to doubt his popularity. That raises very serious questions about what would happen if he were indeed to become president. I do not sympathize with benign assessments of it.

The benign assessments are exactly like benign assessments of this country having another round of dictatorship. That's what people, who are (wrongly) blaming democracy for this country's woes, want. Iron-fisted rule, they say, is fine, so long as we have a Mahathir or Lee Kuan Yew instead of a Marcos. Well, iron-fisted rule is not fine, whether you have a Mahathir or Lee instead of a Marcos. This country is still the envy of Malaysians and Singaporeans, despite its patent woes, for its freedoms. What is wrong with a dictatorship is a dictatorship, not just the individual dictator. By the same token, what is wrong with running the country like an action movie is running the country like an action movie, no matter who plays the lead role.

But I don't buy the tack taken by GMA's people of scoffing at the threat, or worse dismissing FPJ with slight and slur. My own friends were so pissed off by one GMA aide doing that on TV—he was grossly abusive, they said—they all wanted to vote for FPJ there and then out of sympathy. I joked that maybe that GMA aide was secretly being paid by FPJ to elicit that kind of response. It's counterproductive.

It's also hypocritical. GMA shot to fame in 1995, after a poor showing in 1992, because of show biz. It was her movie-star posters in 1995—"the Nora Aunor of Philippine politics"—that made her, a trajectory she has followed ever since. What is appearing at Rico Yan's wake (and not doing so in Lucio San Pedro's, San Pedro being a National Artist), with F4 and at Mandy Moore's concert, and side by side with Manny Pacquiao but show biz? I did say before that the problem with GMA's tack is that once she faces a real show-biz star, and one who has a huge following, she'd be dead. She's paying the price for that folly.

I am for taking the threat of FPJ becoming president deathly seriously. It is a threat. I can only appeal to FPJ to rethink his position if he truly has a good heart. He will be remembered well as a movie star, he won't be so as a president. History will judge him harshly. Eulogies are not the things that will attend his passing.

This country cannot survive six more years of rule by Erap's people, who are also FPJ's people. I myself will treat it as I would the threat of a coup or martial law. With utmost resistance.

* * *

Tonight, a plot unfolds. Hatched by Gary Granada, Bayang Barrios, Cooky Chua, Cynthia Alexander, Joey Ayala, Noel Cabangon, and more than 60 allies and sympathizers, Conspiracy breaks out at Visayas Avenue, QC, beside Ninang's, in front of Shell. 7 p.m. to *sawa*. I am one of the conspirators. Be there to witness the first stirrings of a musical mutiny. Listen to the sounds of (quite literally) an acoustic war. In this troop movement at least, you and not the generals will do the ordering.

But don't forget to pay for your orders.

Opposition in disarray

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

I RAN into Sen. Juan Flavier at the concert featuring a Bulgarian pianist, organized by Bulgaria's honorary consul, Jaime Locsin Ledesma, and I queried him why he was counted among the 12 senators pressing for the reopening of the Jose Pidal issue in the Senate. Flavier said he wanted to see "a closure" of this issue, so that it's not left "hanging" after blue ribbon committee chair Joker Arroyo shelved the investigation with the failure of Sen. Panfilo Lacson to submit more solid evidence. Flavier surmises that if the Senate reopens the case, Ignacio Arroyo would elevate to the Supreme Court his argument on his right to privacy; he argues that this would be all right, as the senators can then make a report on this development in order to move toward closing the case.

I can imagine that the opposition-dominated bloc would want to reopen the Pidal case in order to gather more ammunition against President Macapagal-Arroyo, especially since the opposition is in a big mess now and would want to have something to cover it up. But without the evidence that Joker Arroyo insists Lacson has failed to deliver, reopening the case would be perceived by many as as mere political harassment of GMA.

* * *

Like Humpty Dumpty, the opposition seems to have fallen apart and it's doubtful if it can be put together again even with former President Estrada's intervention. LDP chief Edgardo Angara has expelled two ardent supporters of Lacson, namely, Representatives Rolex Suplico and Agapito Aquino, and in retaliation the latter as well as Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra and Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon have called on Angara to go on leave. Lacson's self-proclamation as opposition presidential candidate with the backing of one LDP faction has left the other faction "no choice," to quote former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, but to anoint movie king Fernando Poe Jr. as the "united" opposition's candidate, even though it's far from being "united." The lack of merit of both candidates is further aggravated by the disastrous infighting.

* * *

The opposition disarray has resulted in the loss of two reelectionist senators. Earlier Sen. Rodolfo Biazon transferred to the Roco camp in disgust over the opposition squabbles, and now Sen. John Osmeña, who had for a long while been allied with the opposition even though he never formally joined it, plans to run as an independent, stressing that he cannot back up either opposition presidential candidates. Osmeña says he'll back up the candidate who will support a federal system to develop backward Mindanao, but that also cancels out Raul Roco for him, as the latter has already said he's against the concept. That leaves only President Macapagal as a possible candidate for John O, and I suspect he would end up aligning with her and even running as a guest candidate of Lakas, especially now that his brother Lito has joined the Roco camp.

* * *

Speaking of the Lakas senatorial line-up, some quarters are wondering if a political stalwart from the Eastern Visayas could be drafted to represent that region. Eastern Visayans complain that they have not had a senator since the late Sen. Decoroso Rosales in the '60s. Region 8 has six provinces that command a total of about 1.5 million votes.

* * *

Reports say NPC founder and chair emeritus Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. is backing up GMA even if other reports say he's funding the campaign of FPJ; it is surmised that FPJ would never run without Cojuangco's financial backing. But I won't be surprised if he really backs up GMA, as the opposition's disunity may negate its chances of recapturing Malacañang. Moreover, he would doubtless want to make sure the economy will perform beyond 2004, something that an FPJ presidency cannot assure. Cojuangco strikes political pundits as a very *segurista* player, and an indication may be the fact that in the House of Representatives he is busy building up his bloc, doubtless to protect his vast empire. Aside from his two sons, Representatives Charlie and Mark Cojuangco, there's his nephew Rep. Gilbert Teodoro of Tarlac. They could be joined come 2004 by Quezon City councilor and minority leader Bong C. Suntay, the lawyer-son of Cojuangco's sister Isabel, who'll be running in QC's third district against Rep. Nanette Daza. Suntay didn't make it on a previous try, but this time he seems to be getting a head start, plus the Cojuangco money.

* * *

A gift to consider this Christmas season is a book called "God Provides," which is a compilation of "joyous narratives" of favors obtained from the Lord through the intercession of St. Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei, who was canonized in Rome last Oct. 6, 2002. Published by "Friends in Art Inc." and "Arts Unlimited," in partnership with Gabriel Books and edited by noted editor-writer Monina Allarey Mercado, "God Provides" features favors of all kinds as narrated by Filipino devotees of St. Josemaria and documented from 1975, the year he died in Rome, up to April 2002 before his canonization. The many devotees who obtained the favors through his intercession remain nameless in the book; but as editor Mercado put it, "Every narrative that came our way was told in a spirit of gratitude..., Spoken by a young man, by a grandmother, by a priest, by a doctor or by a mother, the gratitude is joyful and childlike, over and over, again and again." But St. Josemaria's "specialty" is conversion of souls, writes Mercado, and "The outstanding stories of conversion and return to the sacraments in this book attest to (his) powerful intercession in bringing souls back to God." Copies may be obtained from Alma Soderama at the University of Asia & the Pacific in Ortigas, Pasig; Poy Pantaleon, 0917-840-4040, and Lita Hidalgo, 0917-791-1855.

China-Taiwan unlikely to go beyond rhetoric

NEWS ANALYSIS

Jane Macartney

SINGAPORE—A war of words between China and Taiwan is simmering but the chances that it will boil over into military action or mar a visit to Washington by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao this week are remote.

That is not only because US President George W. Bush may well see eye-to-eye with Wen on opposition to any move by Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to drive the island toward independence through his call for a referendum on sovereignty.

It is also because of the deterrent of a US commitment to defend the island and the limitations of China's huge but only slowly modernizing military machine.

"Despite the grave situation across the Taiwan Strait, Wen is likely to work with the Bush team for a soft landing of the Taiwan issue," Yu Bin, senior research associate at the Shanghai Institute of American Studies, wrote in a report this week.

Analysts expect Bush to reassure Wen, at least behind closed doors, that the United States opposes independence for Taiwan. The wording is crucial since the usual US stand is to stop short, saying only that it does not support independence.

US opposition has been voiced before in private but Chen's drive to push ahead with a referendum to coincide with a tough presidential election in March has sharply raised the stakes.

Chen said on Friday the referendum will be to call on China to withdraw ballistic missiles aimed at Taiwan or to ask Beijing to eschew the use of force.

That stops short of early hints the referendum would be held on the issue of independence, but will still be viewed in Beijing as a show of belligerence.

"Chen must feel that it is worth alienating the Chinese and the Americans," said Ralph Cossa, head of the Pacific Forum CSIS think tank in Hawaii, who is visiting Taiwan.

Beijing has responded with angry words to Chen's provocation, which many analysts see as a ploy to portray himself and the island he governs as lying in the line of Chinese fire.

Wen said China would "pay any price" to prevent independence and senior People's Liberation Army officers said Beijing would sacrifice its economy and even the 2008 Olympic Games if war were necessary.

Despite the rhetoric, analysts say Chinese anger has been restrained.

"By and large, China is holding back its frustration and is working to put the US on the spot to make sure the US does something to deal with it," said Andrew Yang, secretary general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies in Taipei.

"Beijing has thus far refused to take the bait," said Cossa.

The last time Beijing lost its temper over Taiwan—and tried to teach pro-independence forces a lesson by test-firing missiles into the sea around the island in 1996—its saber-rattling only fueled the election victory of then-President Lee Teng-hui.

Washington has not stood idly by as ties deteriorated across the Strait.

Yang and other China-watchers say US special envoy James Moriarty, director for Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, visited Taiwan last week to quiz Chen about his intentions over the referendum issue.

The Taiwan presidential office has denied such a visit, but analysts say Moriarty asked Chen several pointed questions on whether a referendum could change the status of Taiwan.

The island is a diplomatic anomaly. Since the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949, both Taipei and Beijing have agreed there is only one China but disagree over which government rules it.

And Beijing has always reserved the right to use force to recover the renegade province. Whether it can is another matter.

Yang said the statements by PLA generals about their readiness to make great sacrifices to protect China's territorial integrity would be difficult to put into effect.

"If they make sacrifices, they will expect a return and I am not sure that the PLA has that kind of assurance." A defense expert was more forthright.

"They don't have the capability to invade Taiwan," said Robert Karniol of Jane's Defence Weekly based in Bangkok.

"The PLA basically isn't sufficiently equipped—they don't have a capable air force, they have a limited naval ability and they don't have enough transport to move a sufficient number of troops to be effective," he said.

But China can make life very uncomfortable for Taiwan.

"They'd create a lot of panic," said Cossa.

It is more likely that Chen's maneuvers could anger not only his No. 1 enemy but his No. 1 friend.

"He risks losing the confidence of the US and that would give him a lot of trouble in the future," said Yang.

"Unfortunately the more restrained Beijing becomes, the more Taipei seems inclined to push the envelope," said Cossa.

"It may be too much to imply that Chen is consciously trying to alienate Washington, but he certainly does not appear too concerned if this occurs." US pressure coupled with Chinese restraint may have tempered Chen's ambitions.

Last week, Chen used the visit of two US senators to say the aim of his defensive referendum was to maintain the status quo and to specify it would not be linked to independence.

He may realize his posturing could prompt Bush this week to tell Wen in public that Washington opposes Taiwan independence.

"Chen will not cross the red line," said Yang.

Reuters

Democracy has reasons reason knows nothing of

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

ANG PANDAY may be a high school dropout, but he is teaching some people a lesson in mathematics. Even before the ink dries predicting or urging his campaign's demise, the bad news from the Social Weather Stations arrives to stun the detractors of FPJ, who is mistaken for someone else. But by provoking so much writing on sexy topics like the margin of error and random sampling in scientific surveys, FPJ promotes the education of erudite men. Let me help.

In the SWS snapshot of national voter preferences taken Nov. 8-24, FPJ seized the yellow jersey in a 10-legged race with Noli de Castro, Raul Roco, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Ping Lacson. Down at 14 percent in September, he took the lead with 25 percent. But did his first cousin, Mahar Mangahas—father of Philippine public opinion polling—suddenly decide it was time to sell his children off and get into the business of rigging a survey, just to give FPJ a couple of cheap headlines he hardly needs? Nilpotent probability matrix.

Still, some are dissatisfied with Mangahas' inability to explain the results. They think nothing explains the surge in FPJ's measured popularity at the time the survey was taken, so they insinuate dark things. Yet, many missed the obvious in the Net Satisfaction Ratings part of the survey which "finds low levels of public satisfaction with the President, the Chief Justice, both houses of Congress, and the Supreme Court, within the discordant context of GMA's turnabout on 2004 and the Davide-impeachment move, not to mention the Jose Pidal and Kuratong Baleleng charges."

The Davide impeachment is reflected in the massive hemorrhage of public trust in the Supreme Court, plunging from +16 percent to +8 percent—its third lowest rating since 1990. The Chief Justice is now at +5 percent down from +15 percent—the lowest NSR of any justice since 1986. Ironically, he previously had the highest rating, too.

But Gloria lost supporters both pro- and anti-impeachment who saw her act without conviction, and concluded that she just does not have that ineffable, inexplicable thing called leadership. The undecided may be deciding. She tried to eat her cake and have it too, something great leaders never do. Gloria's loss was FPJ's gain.

Even in reputable scientific polls, there is a part more like journalism and not scientific in the same way as the numerical results. The raw data are the "news" part of a survey. The "opinion" part is where reporters, pundits and survey designers try to make sense of the scientific data. But like a real weather report, no survey can measure the detailed causes of the social weather pattern observed.

Some people blithely make statements about surveys that cause unwitting self-abasement. For example, when you combine two survey quantities, by adding or subtracting them together, the result always has twice the statistical error and is far less reliable than the raw data. Many absurd and silly things are said not knowing this. For example, the "margin of error"—the plus or minus-in the Net Satisfaction Rating of the 1200 respondent surveys, is not plus or minus 3 percent, but plus or minus 6 percent because it is the arithmetic difference of two other uncertain statistics. The "change" over time of the NSR is a virtually useless number with only 1,200 respondents since the uncertainty is plus or minus 12 percent, a fat pencil 24 percent wide. My toenails hurt from uncontrollable crying and giggling every time I look at my file of headlines, opinion columns and quotes of note from the erudite regarding surveys. But then I often venture into areas of expertise not my own, so I won't stop anyone from doing the same.

I genuinely feel bad for Gloria now. The presidency was thrust upon her prematurely. You may not agree, but I wish the mob at Edsa II had failed, that the Senate resumed the impeachment trial and Erap was acquitted by the craven eleven. Politically incorrect heresy? It wouldn't be the first time in this space. But think. If that had happened, the enraged People Power Coalition would have swept the 2001 elections and taken impregnable control of the House and Senate. Erap could have been impeached, tried and convicted by now, or properly resigned. Gloria—as her fairy godmother originally planned—could be leading a victorious campaign to the Palace next year, a finally victorious Jean d'Arc of a defeated Edsa II. Erap would be completely behind us. Instead, he is like an albatross around the nation's neck, a living, limping testament to the jiu-jitsu move that Jaime Cardinal Sin and Chief Justice Davide did at Edsa II.

Democracy is the rule of the people, right? Not exactly. Democracy is the rule of a majority of the people who periodically elect leaders for a set period of time. It is a fact that "majorities" are wrong from time to time, if not more often. But only the elite is mean enough to suggest people "deserve" the leaders they get, forgetting free will and concupiscence in leaders. The genius of democracy is that it is designed to survive both rascals and heroes by expecting both in history. But surely, the next President must win a clear majority of the people's popular vote in 2004, unless he or she wants to sleep on an unstable bed of nails for the next six years.

Knock heads together. FPJ-Ping versus GMA-Roco. A contest between us and us and which way to go. You will really need the inventor of statistics then, Blaise Pascal, who once said: "The heart has reasons reason knows nothing of."

(Visit my personal website http://deanjorgebocobo.blogspot.com/)

Family feud

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THROUGH no fault of their own, newspaper reporters sometimes stumble on skeletons in the closet or closely-held secrets of some people. The story usually begins with the complaint by somebody who feels aggrieved by the action of another. Then the drama unfolds.

Last Nov. 30, the Sunday INQUIRER magazine featured the letter of Tricia Pahati who reacted to an article ("Green without limits") that came out in the Oct. 26 issue. The story in question recounted, among others, the hardships that physically disabled Danilo Nicodemus "Nikki" Pahati Jr. (the letter sender's brother) went through as he tried to find his place in the sun.

According to Nikki, he bucked the odds by his lonesome. By dint of hard work and perseverance, he is presently completing his second year in college and, at the same time, earning his keep as a writer-researcher for a United Nations agency. He is also a member of the Earthsavers Dreams Ensemble that was recently chosen as Unesco Artists for Peace for its "contributions through the performing arts to the propagation of Unesco's message of peace, tolerance and hope."

Nikki did not have kind words for his family, in particular, his mother, whom he blamed for most of the troubles that he is going through now. He was the picture of a very bitter person.

His account drew a sharp rejoinder from his sister. In her letter, Tricia defended her family from the criticism of "lack of family support." She recounted the sacrifices made by her mother and the other family members to prepare Nikki for life's struggles. She traced the roots of her brother's problems to his emotional inadequacies.

Fair treatment

Tricia said she is "not writing to destroy my brother. I wrote to tell the truth. I cannot allow my brother to dishonor our parents in the name of ambition. It is imperative to inform you of the facts behind your subject's personal life, especially when the material is published in a very respectable newspaper."

The INQUIRER published below Tricia's letter Nikki's response. He did not controvert the statements of his sister. He justified his expression of disappointment with his family by saying that "it was important to cite those incidents, unsavory as they may be, as the focal points that have shaped my character and present circumstances."

The family feud that inadvertently became public caught the attention of a budding journalist, Cristina Esteron. She wrote: "I just read the article on the person... as well as the letter from his sister. When a story is written, isn't there a fundamental duty to report both sides of the story? When something bad is said about someone, no matter how small, the other side has to be aired. How can PDI fail to do that? It seems to be a pretty big oversight.

"I write for a school newspaper. Students, the school administration and faculty may not say the best things about each other. But the important thing is I would never publish a story if the other side has not had an opportunity to respond to allegations. Even if that means that my story won't be so 'compelling' or newsworthy.

"Let your readers be the judge of that. With this oversight, I will find it hard to believe any of your stories anymore. I will assume that they are probably all hyped up."

Reliance

When told about the reader's complaint, the author of the article in question conceded the validity of the points raised. She explained that she was carried away by Nikki's story that she let her guard down. She took his statements at their face value and did not bother to verify them with his mother or any member of his family.

If the subject of the story were a politician or somebody who deliberately seeks public attention, she would have checked and double-checked everything before writing the article. She felt Nikki did not fall in that category.

On top of the sobering effect that Nikki's physical condition had on the author, she relied on the reputation of the official of the nongovernment organization who referred Nikki to her. She thought the endorsement of that official, who is known for her dedication to worthy social causes, of Nikki's character was a virtual "good housekeeping seal" for his honesty and credibility. A verification of his statements would have been a superfluity or an unnecessary exercise.

I sympathize with the author's soft treatment of Nikki. I chanced upon Nikki and his companion, and even talked to them for a few minutes, when the author interviewed them at the INQUIRER offices for the Oct. 26 article. Nikki's physical disability and efforts to move around unaided can melt the coldest of hearts. I thought that others who may be similarly situated and are not made of the same stuff would have given up and cursed the Fates for their sorrows.

The author admitted that she committed a lapse of judgment in writing Nikki's story on the basis of his account alone without getting the side of her mother or any member of his family whom he criticized in rather strong words.

Apology

No question about it, the INQUIRER erred in the publication of the article in question. It did not give the subject of Nikki's critical statements the opportunity to present its side and be read in the same story. The article fell short of the newspaper's standards of fairness and objectivity.

For this reason, the INQUIRER apologizes to Nikki's family and the readers. It regrets whatever hurt or misconception the story may have caused. On the part of the article's author, she looks at the incident as a learning experience that would guide her in dealing with similar news personalities in the future.

One final note. It is gratifying to know that the campus journalist who called our attention to this matter adheres closely to the rule on fair play. For her, balance is more important than coming out with the story immediately or writing it in a manner that would catch the readers' attention.

If the young men and women who publish the school newspapers in our country have a similar frame of mind, then there is reason to be optimistic about the future of media in the Philippines. Let's keep our fingers crossed that they will not lose their idealism when they enter the real world of journalism.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Reexamine guidelines on sexual misconduct

THE PROGRESSIVE Organization of Gays in the Philippines (ProGay) questions the double standard adopted by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in a proposed set of guidelines on sexual misconduct among priests.

While the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines agreed to wait for priests to sire two children before automatically defrocking them, those found committing homosexual acts are to be sent to a rehabilitation center, harping on the Church's old dogma that gays need to be cured of a disease.

It is laudable for the Catholic Church to publicly apologize for sexual abuses committed by priests, mostly against powerless women and children.

But the proposed "Pastoral Guidelines on Sexual Abuses and Misconduct by the Clergy" released two weeks ago seems to be soft on heterosexual priests who wish to fool around with women in the future while being unduly harsh on gay ones.

In the spirit of fairness, Church officials must treat both straight and gay clergy equally with no regard for their sexual orientation. Better yet, the Church has to respond to calls for reforms such as optional celibacy for the clergy and the religious.

It will help priests who have homosexual feelings to avoid resorting to predatory behavior on unwilling victims if entire Catholic hierarchies and lay bodies boldly reexamine their unscientific, stuffy moralistic views of alternate sexualities. So-called rehabilitation efforts based on the Church's antiquated gay disease models cannot overcome developed tastes for powerless victims.

There are priests who have non-predatory, egalitarian homosexual relationships with their consenting partners who are neither victimized nor temporary lust objects. Stable monogamous gay Christian couples such as Saints Serge and Bacchus are even part of the folklore of the early European churches.

They are role models and should be encouraged to open themselves as living proofs that homosexual affairs in the priesthood can be a valid part of Christian community building. To separate them, drive them underground and threaten them with expulsion as the CBCP suggests, can only breed closeted psychos who prey on boys when no one is looking, or explode in costly scandals and lawsuits.

—MICHAEL URBANO,
secretary general,
ProGay-Philippines,
progay@starmail.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Torture should be made a crime

I HAVE just arrived from a 10-day human rights training session sponsored by the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), which was held in Sri Lanka. The participants came from 23 human rights groups in different Asian countries like Pakistan, South Korea, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, India, China, Nepal, Sweden, Mongolia and Hong Kong. They raised the concern that up to now the Philippines does not yet regard torture as a crime.

It was emphasized that for torture to stop, an effective criminal law was necessary. Although the Philippines has ratified the convention against torture, this still has to be translated into domestic legislation. This failure to craft legislation that would make the convention into law, amounts to a breach of international law.

My concern is that, torture is a crime against humanity. The police and the military continue to practice torture in order to extract information from victims, particularly political detainees. While the use of torture became commonplace during earlier states of emergency and martial law, it has continued to this day. From 1986 to June 2003, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), documented 365 cases of torture.

A case in point is the fate of five residents of Cotabato City, Mindanao who were illegally arrested and horribly tortured by the police. The five included two minors. They were apprehended in connection with the Davao airport bombing.

On April 9, the five were taken to the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group headquarters in Davao City. They were charged in court with multiple murder and multiple frustrated murder for the death of 38 people and wounding scores of others. The police submitted confessions they had extracted from the victims.

This is one of so many cases of torture still unresolved due to the lack of an enabling law. The ratification of the pending bill is urgent.

—RITA M. MELECIO,
regional coordinator,
Task Force Detainees
of the Philippines-
Northern/Southern
Mindanao,
219 Ponce corner
Aurora Sts.,
Davao City

Valerio family protests columnist's claims

THE FAMILY of the late Justice Jun N. Valerio wishes to refute the baseless and malicious claims of Solita Monsod in her Nov. 15, 2003 column.

The Valerio case is about an unconscionable and unremorseful woman in the person of Milagros Embuscado Valerio, who conspired with her lover to kill her husband. Her own son now stands as the private complainant in the parricide case. Her lover was arrested in November 2001 by NBI agents after more than a year of hiding and has confessed to the crime; he is now detained in the Quezon City Jail. Notwithstanding the strong evidence of guilt, RTC Judge Ma. Teresa Yadao granted her motion for bail, immediately after the lover's arrest, guilty plea and execution of extra-judicial confession of the conspiracy.

Monsod's attempt to compare the Valerio case with the Kuratong Baleleng case is an insult to the intelligence of the reading public.

First, lawyer Sigfrid Fortun was replaced by Rene V. Sarmiento, after Yadao had granted Milagros Valerio's motion for bail. Second, the warrant of arrest against Milagros was issued not by Yadao but by Judge Jaime Salazar, to whose sala the case was originally raffled. Third, Yadao acted with grave abuse of discretion in favor of Milagros and against the victim's family. In fact, Sarmiento immediately elevated the bail issue to the Court of Appeals, where it is still pending, for "grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction." The Office of the Solicitor General adopted his position.

Monsod claims to have personal knowledge of the Valerio case when all she seems to listen to is the incredible denial of the accused whom she hardly knows. Her only defense seems to be that Milagros has the title "Dr." appended to her name. But it must be remembered that the murderer Hannibal Lecter also had a "Dr." to his name. Some of the world's greatest men and some of its most evil, also attained the highest degree of education. It is not one's educational attainment but one's deed that makes a man. But that is not the issue as Monsod would want us to believe. The issue is Monsod has no personal knowledge of the case as she was not in the crime scene and never witnessed the ongoing trial. Further, she never interviewed Antonio Cabador, the co-conspirator of Milagros, nor the victim's family.

It is quite ironic that Monsod whose articles were marked as Exhibits 10 and 11 for the defense, can claim personal knowledge of something she has none. The question remains: What is her motive for continuously subjecting to public trial a case which is already in the jurisdiction of the court? How can Monsod judge fairness and impartiality when she herself cannot afford to be fair and impartial? How can she advocate justice when she herself is committing injustice?

—LAARNI N. VALERIO,
JB1-104 Hardin ng Doña Aurora,
E. Jacinto St., UP Campus,
Diliman, Quezon City

No way 'idealistic'

I WAS disgusted by Neal Cruz's column of Nov. 12, 2003 defending the "Brat Pack" of Congress as just being "idealistic." Excuse me? Cruz has twisted and mangled the meaning of idealism when it is obvious that the Brat Pack's loyalty is not to this country but to money, power and, of course, to that man in San Miguel Corp., whose wealth is based on the farmers' money.

Anyone, even with a few brain cells in his head, would know that the only reason that that man from SMC wants Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. removed is because Davide has a large influence over the other justices on the coco levy decision.

This Brat Pack, whom Cruz calls as "idealistic," would never have the wisdom of Recto, Laurel, Diokno, Sumulong, Tañada or Ninoy even in their most advanced age. Never has the phrase "so young, so corrupt" been more applicable to anybody than these congressmen.

—ANDREA V. ORLINO,
483 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

'E-Gloria' targets 2M students, teachers

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—A school-based volunteer organization aiming to gather support for President Macapagal-Arroyo's bid for the presidency in 2004 was formed here on Friday.

Called "E-Gloria," the group plans to mobilize two million college students and teachers for Ms Macapagal's bid, said its organizer Emmanuel Angeles, president and chief executive officer of the Clark Development Corp.

EMMANUEL Angeles Jr. ARLAN NAEG

Angeles was the former president of the Association of Universities in the Asia-Pacific. His family owns the Angeles University Foundation in Angeles City, where the late President Diosdado Macapagal, Ms Macapagal's father, was a trustee.

Angeles said "E-Gloria" stands for "Excellence sa Gawa para sa Lipunan! Okay sa Reporma, Intelehensya at Aksyon!"

"E-Gloria" flyers, featuring the photograph of a smiling Ms Macapagal and the presidential seal, were distributed here on Friday during the group's launch.

Angeles said the two million volunteers would be drawn from the 1,303 private colleges and universities in the country.

He also said the group aims to encourage the youth and professionals to support a candidate who can ably lead the country.

That person is Ms Macapagal and "not a high school dropout," he said, referring to action star Fernando Poe Jr.

Angeles said "E-Gloria" was his initiative and was not backed or funded by Malacañang.

But exiled communist leader Jose Maria Sison, in a message during the sixth congress of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan Central Luzon here, called for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo before the May 2004 elections.

"In case she still wins because of vote-buying and cheating, it is easy for the broad masses of people to cause her downfall like they did in the case of (the late strongman Ferdinand) Marcos in 1986 and (former President Joseph) Estrada in 2001," Sison said in the four-page message in Filipino. It was read to more than 500 sectoral leaders of Bayan-Central Luzon.

Sison also said the worsening economic crisis and the intense rift within the reactionary elite would not allow the elections to be fought in peaceful ways. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

NPC in E. Samar to support GMA, says lawmaker

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan denied he has left the Nationalist People's Coalition and joined the ruling party.

But he revealed that the NPC in Eastern Visayas will back the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo and will work for her "victory" in the region in the 2004 elections.

Libanan, the regional chair of the NPC, clarified that he has no intention of leaving the party.

Earlier, presidential liaison officer for legislative affairs Gabriel Claudio disclosed that Libanan, together with Representatives Rep. Gerry Espina of Biliran and Eduardo Veloso of Leyte, both stalwarts of the NPC, had joined the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats.

"We will support President Macapagal-Arroyo and ensure her victory comes the 2004 presidential elections in Eastern Visayas," Libanan told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Libanan is considered Eastern Samar's political kingpin who could make an unknown win a post through his endorsement. Veloso and Espina belong to influential political and landed clans in Leyte and Biliran, respectively.

George Tiopes, one of the regional coordinators of the ruling party in the region, had earlier admitted that based on their survey, it appears that majority of the region more than 1.3 million registered voters will either choose action movie king Fernando Poe Jr. or Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

But Libanan told the INQUIRER that with his support and with that of Veloso and Espina, President Macapagal could expect a good showing at the polls in the region.

Libanan said the NPC in Eastern Visayas decided to throw their support to President Macapagal because she is already "tried and tested."

"She accomplished so many things," he said, without elaborating.

Libanan also said that his loyalty to the NPC begins and ends with business tycoon Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, founder and chair of NPC.

Perez seeks party nod as gubernatorial bet

BATANGAS CITY—After three months of hibernation following the Swiss government's probe of his alleged $2-million account in a Swiss bank, former Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez announced his bid to run for governor of Batangas.

During a press conference at the Days Hotel here Friday, Perez introduced the health, employment, agriculture, tourism, education and drugs (HEATED) program that he said he plans to improve on, should he win the gubernatorial race.

He alluded to the Batangas port project, the Southern Tagalog Access Road, the Calumpang bridge, and all the national, provincial, municipal and even barangay roads as the projects that wouldn't have been implemented if not for him.

"The Cebu International Airport, Davao International Airport, even the LRT2 wouldn't have pushed through if it wasn't for me, during my stint as DOTC secretary" Perez said.

Only three of 34 towns and city mayors attended the press conference. They were Victor Portugal of Taysan, Herminigildo Dolor of Bauan, and Ruben Guce of San Jose.

During the forum, the former justice secretary denied having a Swiss bank account. "Up to now, nobody has proven nor seen that Swiss account. I am not worried about that at all," Perez said.

On Aug. 18, the INQUIRER ran a story on the Swiss government's investigation on the former justice secretary for allegedly laundering $2 million in a Swiss bank account.

Aside from the money laundering charge, Perez is still facing other administrative charges.

"I have all the reasons to believe that those cases will be dismissed," Perez said. "If I have detractors, it's just part of politics."

Perez said if the Lakas-CMD won't choose him as its flag-bearer in Batangas, he would be willing to support President Macapagal-Arroyo's candidacy.

Perez has been losing the support of local politicians here since early this year.

This was worsened last July when the mayors of the second district organized the "Koalisyon ng Lakas ng Batangueño," a group of politicians that seek to buck Perez's return to politics.

He resigned as justice secretary early this year. *Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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ROUNDUP

Indonesian trade visit

DAVAO CITY—A 40-member delegation from Indonesia will be in Mindanao for a trade visit starting today to further strengthen the ties between the two countries. Indonesian vice consul to Davao City Johannes Manginsela said the governors of North Sulawesi, Gorontalo, Central Sulawesi, South Sulawesi, and Southeast Sulawesi would join the delegation. He said the Indonesian delegation has expressed interest in forging ties with traders from General Santos particularly those from the fishing industry. *Joel Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau.*

Uy victory affirmed

TACLOBAN CITY—The House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) has affirmed with finality the victory of Rep. Reynaldo Uy as the first congressional district representative of Samar. In its 10-page unanimous resolution dated Oct. 23, the HRET said it did not find any merits on the motion for reconsideration filed by defeated candidate Ma. Paz Tuazon. On July 24, the HRET ruled that Uy, 52, won against Tuazon by 896 votes. Based on its revision of the contested ballots, Uy, who ran under Liberal Party, garnered total votes of 51,239 while Tuazon, of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, got 50,343 votes. *Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

New cop director

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental has a new police director. Senior Supt. Amaron Morrok replaced Senior Supt. Drusillo Bolodo, who already completed his two-year tour of duty. Morrok came from the Philippine National Police Regional Office for Central Visayas based in Cebu City. Gov. George Arnaiz said he chose Morrok from a list of three nominees because Morrok's program against illegal drugs jibed with the priority of the province. Morrok was installed during the turnover ceremony on Nov. 17. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

The cousin, not the mayor

IN the article "Politics turns gentlemen into squabblers" (Across the Nation, Dec. 7, pp. A10), Antonio Remollo was identified as the former mayor of Dumaguete City. The person in the article, a local businessman known for the monicker "TonyRems," was not the former mayor but the cousin and namesake of the former mayor, Felipe Antonio Remollo. Our apologies to the two Remollos. *PDI Visayas Bureau*

Roxas hits loan sharks

SAN PABLO CITY—Department of Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas II exhorted market vendors here to avoid moneylenders who charge high interests and urged them to avail of the government's lending at 2-percent interest rate per month. In a speech on Nov. 27 at the public market here, Roxas said that at 2-percent interest per month, borrowers could save P180 for every P1,000 that they borrow compared to the one that charges 20-percent interest rate. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Baby with rare ailment needs liver transplant

COTABATO CITY—Doctors have given this year-old boy 62 months to live if his parents failed to let him undergo an expensive liver transplant in Taiwan.

Francis Tumimbang was diagnosed with a rare congenital liver disease called "biliary atresia" when he was 2 months old.

The disease is characterized by the absence or closure of the ducts that drain the bile from the liver.

Doctors say biliary atresia is a progressive inflammatory process that begins very soon after birth on affected individuals.

Francis' doctors have recommended a liver transplant to be performed in a specialized medical hospital in Taiwan. The operation could cost his parents some P3 million, exclusive of their travel expenses to Taiwan.

Dr. Anna Jessica Abear Ortiga of the nuclear medicine department of the Davao Doctors' Hospital in Davao City warned that a delay in the surgery could worsen Francis' condition to a level of a "hepacellular disease."

Marlon Tumimbang, the baby's father, who works as a technician at the ABS-CBN relay station here, said he could barely afford his son's medicines.

The boy's mother is a housewife.

During President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent visit to Carmen, North Cotabato for the ceremonial opening of the Malmar irrigation project there, Marlon went with the local ABS-CBN crew covering the affair, to hand her and other officials his solicitation cards to help his son survive.

"I beseech your kind support and generous hearts to please help my son live a normal life, so our family could stay longer together with him enjoying as many Christmas seasons as other kids do. Of even greater help are your prayers. Please also help us pray for him," Marlon and his wife wrote on the card he wanted to hand personally to the President.

But Marlon said he thought the President's security personnel were too quick to hinder him from getting anywhere close to her.

He was also afraid that soliciting financial assistance could run counter to the TV network's policy having in mind the code of ethics for journalists, although he is not a reporter.

But with nobody to turn to, Marlon said his last resort is to appeal to people with generous character, the Good Samaritans, out there as well as government officials, who may read this story, to share with them any help.

Marlon Tumimbang can be reached at the following contact numbers: (064) 421-8418; (064) 390-3371 and 0917-374-0282; 0916-398-8295. The family's PCI Bank Account No. in Marlon's name is 1198090820. *Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

House to probe planned coal-fired plant in Iloilo

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The House of Representatives will conduct an investigation on the environmental impact of the proposed $150-million coal-powered plant in Banate town, Iloilo.

Bayan Muna Rep. Siegfred Deduro said the committee on environment and natural resources chaired by Leyte Rep. Eduardo Veloso would conduct the investigation.

The investigation was prompted by a privilege speech of Deduro on Dec. 1 that called the attention of the House on the proposed construction of 100-megawatt plant in a 25-hectare site in Barangay San Salvador Banate, about 54 kilometers north of this city.

In his speech, Deduro said coal plants bring "incalculable damage" to the environment and to the lives of the people. He urged the government to tap renewable energy such as solar, wind and hydro instead of coal.

"Coal power plants spell death to our people and our environment," said Deduro, citing studies of local and international environmental groups.

He refuted the claim of the builder Korean Electric Power Co. (Kepco), that the plant will be environmentally safe because it will be using the Circulating Fluidized Bed Combustion (CFBC) system.

He said a study of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) showed that CFBC plants were not able to achieve EPA standards in nitrogen oxide emission, fine particulate control, and carbon dioxide emission reduction.

Deduro pointed out that the proposed plant would directly threaten Polo Islet, which is near the site of the proposed project.

The two-hectare islet was declared a marine reserved zone under Banate Sangguniang Bayan Resolution No. 50 Series of 2003, according to Deduro.

He said there is a need to address the projected deficit of power supply. But, he said, measures initiated by the Department of Energy will already resolve the problem without putting up the power plant, according to Deduro.

He cited the transfer of the 100-megawatt Pinamucan diesel plant from Batangas to Dingle, Iloilo and the improvement of the transmission lines of the Leyte-Cebu-Panay-Negros grid.

Kepco has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Banate municipal government to conduct studies for the construction of the plant under a build-operate-own scheme.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and Energy officials defended the project.

Pangasinan coastal towns yielding more fish catch

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—It takes the fishermen themselves, with a little help from the government and non-government sectors, to revive the dying Lingayen Gulf.

Fishermen in the towns of Anda, Bolinao and Bani and Alaminos City reported that their daily catch has "considerably increased" after the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the coastal towns.

There are 11 marine and 12 mangrove protected areas, also called sanctuaries, in Anda, Bani, Bolinao and Alaminos, covering 386 hectares. Fishing is strictly prohibited inside the sanctuaries but fishermen can fish around or near the areas.

The people's organizations that established the MPAs issued this report in a symposium on MPA management of the Lingayen Gulf recently.

The symposium was sponsored by the Marine Environment Resources Foundation (Merf), a University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute-based organization.

In Bolinao, Jessem Gabatin, president of the Samahan ng Mangingisda at Mamamayan ng Balingasay (Sammabal), said their daily catch near the fish sanctuary in the village has increased from a quarter of a kilogram four years ago to three kgs this year.

The Sammabal has been maintaining a 14.77-hectare fish sanctuary since 1999 where the coral cover is surveyed to be growing at the rate of 5 percent yearly.

It has also become a model sanctuary that is visited and studied by groups of local and foreign fishermen and NGOs.

Paolo Pagaduan of the University of the Philippines Social Action and Research for Development Foundation said the establishment of the sanctuaries had resulted in the decrease in illegal fishing by residents in Anda.

In Bani, Fred Botardo, the town's agriculture officer, said 33 hectares in Barangay San Miguel have been reforested with mangroves. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Palace: Drug lords also face execution

From page A1

Bunye said Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo has clarified that President Macapagal-Arroyo would not stay the execution of drug traffickers whose death sentences have been affirmed by the Supreme Court.

"There are no ifs, ands or buts about it," Bunye said of the convicted drug offenders.

He said only death row convicts sentenced to die for committing "private crimes," such as rape and other heinous offenses, would continue to enjoy a reprieve.

Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, political and campaign spokesperson for the President, added that Ms Macapagal would no longer stay the executions of kidnappers and drug pushers whose execution dates had been set for January onward.

Romulo said on Saturday that only convicted kidnappers would be executed following the President's decision on Friday to lift the moratorium on judicial executions.

He had said: "[The lifting] is only for those convicted of kidnap-for-ransom activities. [For] those who are not kidnappers, we recommended a reprieve.'"

Malacañang's decision to limit the death penalty to kidnappers drew flak from a host of pro-capital punishment advocates. Most of them questioned the limited application of the death penalty.

"Selective execution won't be effective in deterring the rise in criminality," said Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) chair Dante Jimenez.

The VACC said Ms Macapagal should stick to her announcement last Friday that she would not stand in the way of executions scheduled next month.

Lawyer Leonard de Vera of the Equal Justice for All Movement said there was neither "rhyme nor logic" in issuing a moratorium on executions, only to lift it as a result of "extraordinary circumstances," and then later make capital punishment exclusively for kidnappers on death row.

"If you would go by the gravity of the offense," he argued, "in kidnapping, there's still the chance to recover the victim alive but in murder, the victim is dead. So why not implement the death penalty in a case in which something can no longer be restored?"

A member of Ms Macapagal's own campaign team, Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, called on the President to send not only kidnappers but also drug lords and rapists to the lethal injection chamber. "President Macapagal should do a Marcos by posing no objection to the execution of this century's versions of Lim Seng," he said.

Zubiri, vice chair of the House committee on illegal drugs, was referring to the Chinese national whom the dictator Ferdinand Marcos ordered executed by firing squad in 1973 to show that his martial law regime was serious about the war on drugs.

But Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon) softened his criticism by praising Ms Macapagal for overcoming her personal stand against the penalty.

"That shows her fitness for the job," he said. "Hers was a profile in courage."

More serious

Another administration congressman, Rep. Faysah Dumarpa, questioned the limiting of the penalty to kidnappers.

"Kidnapping could not be more serious an offense (than) rape-murder, drug trafficking or statutory rape," he said.

"Lawmakers who restored the death penalty law anchored their decision to re-impose the punishment on the belief that it would serve as a deterrent in the commission of crimes that are both outrageous and utterly evil," Dumarpa (Lakas, Lanao del Sur) said.

De Vera said issuing a moratorium on all executions was "illogical" in the first place because it would take the effect of amending the law without congressional action.

While Ms Macapagal has the power to pardon or issue a reprieve, De Vera said this should be exercised on a case-to-case basis and not as a matter of general policy.

"Even if the President pardoned 1,000 inmates, there's no question about that," he said. "But if she said that no execution would happen for the rest of the year, it would be a different story."

But more than the question on the wisdom of the moratorium, De Vera said focusing judicial executions on convicted kidnappers would lead the public to believe that the government "enforces only laws that it likes and ignores those that it does not."

"All laws must be enforced," he said. "Selective enforcement results in selective justice. It erodes the people's respect for the rule of law."

Unlikely ally

But Ms Macapagal found an unlikely ally in Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr.

"Anything that the President does now can be interpreted one way or the other but we have to give her the benefit of the doubt insofar as this issue is concerned," Guingona said on Saturday.

He said the timing of the lifting of the moratorium "seems to be justified because of the rash of kidnappings and other violent crimes."

He said he did not know if Ms Macapagal's decision would "please every sector," but added that she should be the one to judge and that her judgment should be consistent with the national interest.

"They [criminal syndicates] do violence not only to the victims but also to society and the nation," Guingona said in a press conference in Iloilo City.

Cebu Gov. Pablo Garcia, who was the principal author of the death penalty law, was elated with the President's decision. It only showed her political will and that she was sensitive to public opinion, he said.

Garcia, who authored the law when he was a congressman, said the implementation of the law was necessary. "The primary purpose of death penalty is justice,'" he said.

Thelma Chiong, national vice president of the Crusade Against Violence (CAV), said she was also happy about Ms Macapagal's decision.

Chiong is the mother of sisters Maryjoy and Jacqueline who were abducted, raped and killed in 1997. The seven convicts in the rape-killing, including scions of wealthy Cebuano families Josman Aznar and Juan Francisco Juan Larranaga, were sentenced to life imprisonment. *With reports from Christine Avendaño abd Edson Tandoc Jr. in Manila; Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Nestor P. Burgos, Jhunnex Napallacan and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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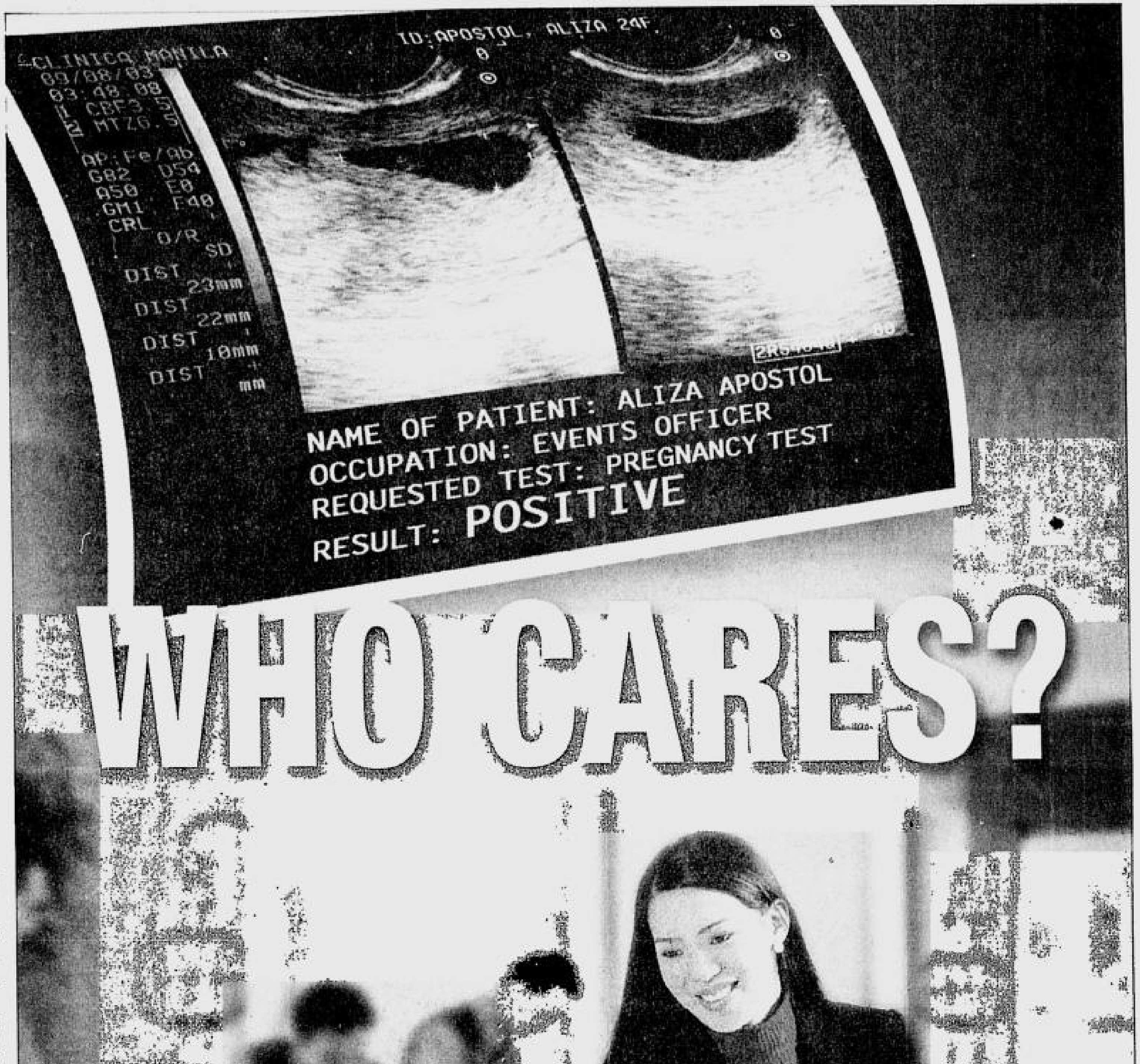

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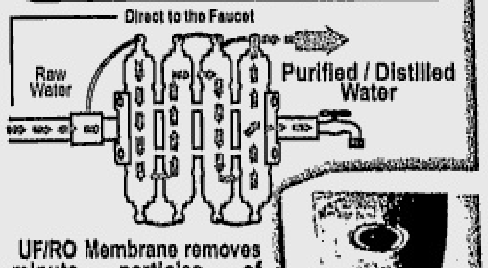

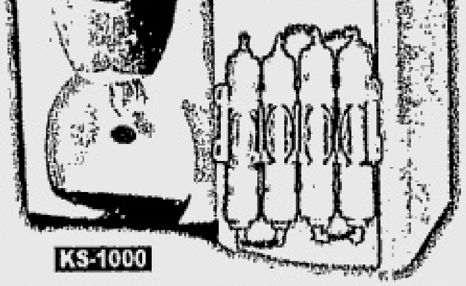

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Danao gun makers busy as polls near

From page A1

dominance and to settle scores.

Jose is one of 5,000 to 10,000 people in the city who work in the gun trade—as many as one in 10 of the population—giving it the dubious distinction of being the gun capital of one of the world's most trigger-happy countries.

Many of the 6,500 people murdered every year meet their end from the barrel of a gun turned out by makeshift factories such as that of Jose.

"We are just doing this for our livelihood, for the money," he said. "If we could feed our families with other jobs, we would do it."

Backyard industry

Since World War II, when traders in the area supplied Filipino guerrillas with weapons to fight the occupying Japanese, Danao has armed everyone from political barons and security guards to Moro rebels.

Most of the gun makers, who work secretly in backyards, or in the surrounding sugarcane fields and rolling hills, are well known to the police, but they typically turn a blind eye in a city where there are few jobs and high unemployment.

"I guess some of them just pity these guys because they have no other work and they feel they may go into some other really illegal things, like maybe joining the subversives," said Mayor Ramon Durano III, referring to communist rebels active there and in troubled areas in Mindanao to the south.

Critics say the police and the military allow the trade to flourish because they profit from it themselves.

There are certainly profits to be made. Jose sells machine pistols for up to P12;000, with small .38 cal. revolvers going for a bargain P1,400—still equivalent to a few weeks' wages for many.

By contrast, the city's 50 legal gun makers work in a cooperative and have to split the proceeds from sales of just 10 to 15 firearms a week.

Gun culture

Police estimate that 800,000 guns are registered in the country and at least another 400,000 are illegal ones.

Many of the Danao weapons end up in Mindanao, the main base of several Moro rebel groups fighting the government.

Japanese Yakuza gangsters and Taiwanese criminals are said to have been customers, smuggling the weapons home on fishing boats.

A GUNSMITH examines a machine pistol he is assembling in a clandestine factory in Danao City. Illegal gun makers in Cebu are expecting brisk sales ahead of next year's elections.

REUTERS

About 100 people died in election-related violence in limited national polls in 2001, 31 of them either incumbent officials or candidates.

Ramon Durano, father of the mayor, who established his family's iron control over the city, was an archetypal provincial warlord complete with a large private army.

"Politics in Cebu is a battle of survival in a very physical sense ... you simply cannot allow yourself to be shot by gangsters," he wrote in his autobiography.

Bad blood

The heavy-handed tactics used to secure votes in the country have become less in recent years but the highly charged atmosphere ahead of next May's election has again stirred the specter of bloodshed.

Opposition politicians have warned of a government-rigged poll, while members of President Macapagal-Arroyo's camp have described the candidacy of actor Fernando Poe Jr. as a desperate bid by the opposition to grab power.

Estrada sympathizers

Government accusations that individuals and groups sympathetic to ousted President Joseph Estrada are behind attempts to destabilize the country, including a failed mutiny by soldiers in July, have also hardened attitudes.

Analysts say violence during next May's election may be characterized by disputes over vote-counting, rather than traditional clan warfare.

"It may the same or could be even slightly less than in the past because the parties, the presidential candidates, in this year's elections do not belong to the traditional warring family clans," said Ricardo Abad, a sociology professor at the Ateneo University in Manila.

"What might trigger problems, though, is any perceived cheating," he said.

Decisions to use vote-counting machines in a handful of areas and to ban an independent electoral watchdog group from doing a quick count have stirred concern about a flawed poll.

Little confidence

With little confidence in the government's ability to protect them, people are unlikely to be convinced any time soon of the need for tougher gun laws.

A government move to bar firearm owners from carrying weapons in public drew howls of protest and a legal challenge, while a bill pushed by Senate President Franklin Drilon to take guns away from citizens has evoked little enthusiasm.

"This is still a society which to a large degree is not bound by impersonal law, where many people feel they cannot trust the police or the state to protect their families," said Abad.

"In a metaphorical sense we are still composed of warring tribes." *Reuters*

10 tycoons bankroll campaign of top bets

From page A1

donors) because they are not only generous but they do take political risks," said Jose Leviste, chair of the Manila-based risk consultancy Polistrat International.

Ms Macapagal, who is seeking another term in office, will be challenged by popular movie star Poe, dubbed the John Wayne of the Philippines, former Sen. Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

Presidential candidates can legally spend up to P400 million for the 2004 battle, but that would be "a very spartan campaign" indeed to woo the country's 40 million voters, Leviste said.

The presidential candidates would need a lot of cash because they would have to foot the bill for their running mates, congressional slates as well as allies running for provincial governorships who would then help them in the stump, he added.

"There's no substitute for money," Gatmaitan said, noting that popularity numbers did not necessarily translate into votes in the past, when violence and fraud could have just as easily shaped the outcome.

Each presidential candidate would also be fielding 336,000 poll watchers to guard more than 112,000 voting precincts from election day until the winner is proclaimed. Gatmaitan said this alone would cost each candidate P600 million.

Gray areas

Leviste said candidates could exploit the many gray areas of campaign finance law.

In any case, no presidential aspirant has been charged or jailed for exceeding election spending limits, admitted Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Alex Magno, a spokesperson for the Macapagal campaign, said: "The word from the political underworld is that there are very little financial flows moving in the direction of any of the major political camps."

"Holders of smart money are waiting for the dust to clear before they make contributions of any significance," he added. *AFP*

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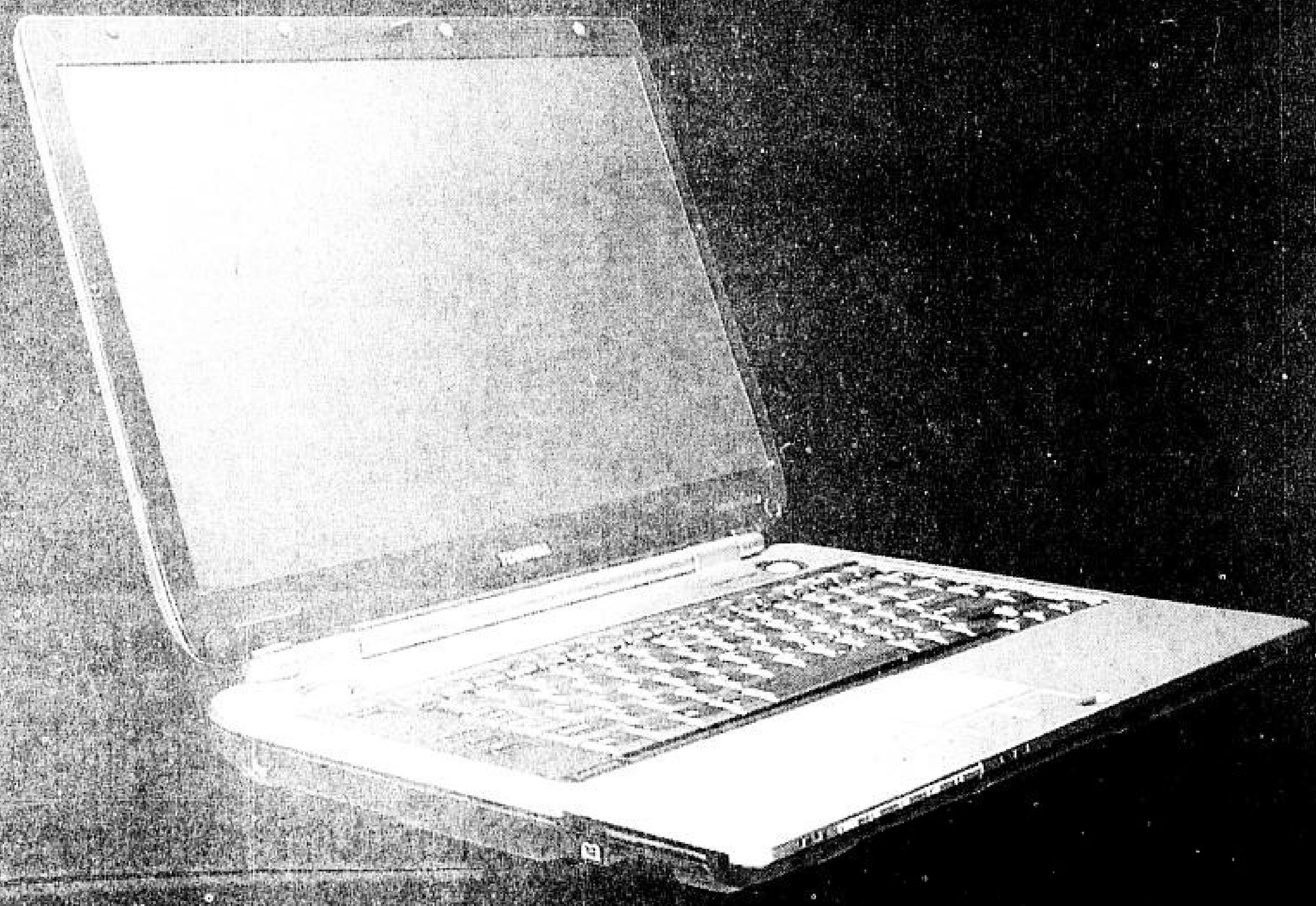

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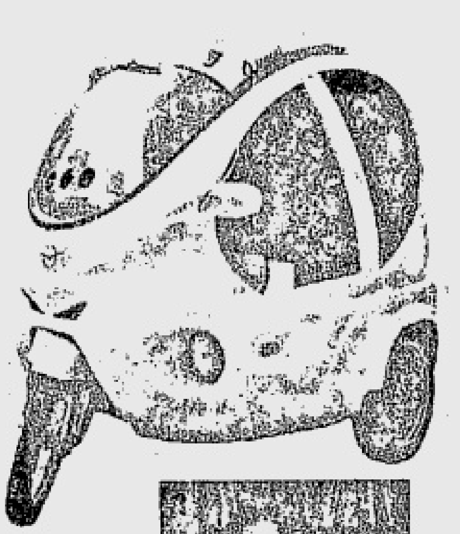


"In terms of family and profession I feel that I have already attained fulfillment and found contentment in life not because of material wealth but rather through spiritual growth that leads me to serve others using God-given talents.

"My fervent wish is to leave a legacy for the Filipino people, especially the masses, by improving their common mode of transportation. With the introduction of the Aerocab, I am hoping to boost the morale of our less fortunate brothers & sisters by uplifting their way of life.

- Architect Topy Vasquez

Every newly graduated architect dreams of heading his or her own architectural firm someday. This may be easy for those with financial resources and the right connections needed to start the ball rolling, but to stay in the game - one must have more than that. And to maintain an architectural design office for 10 years, survive during times of crisis and at the same time build up an impressive track record of projects, calls for only the finest professionals with a clear focus and determination to succeed.

One qualified example is Architect Topy Vasquez, who first gained national recognition in 1998 when he was adjudged winner of the design competition for the UAP (United Architects of the Philippines) Headquarters Building, the head office for the premier league of Filipino architects. This rare achievement earned him the title "Architect's Architect" The building now stands at Scout Rallos Street in Quezon City serving as a giant showcase of architectural & construction materials as well as methods and at the same time functions as an office for the UAP members and other professionals in building and construction industry.

Architect Topy started his office T I Vasquez Architects in October 1993. The firm was registered as a single proprietorship. It took guts for him to decide to push through with it, because during that time he had little financial resources and no clear prospect for projects. Being a member of the BCBP (Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals), Topy followed the leading of the Holy Spirit thru intense discernment and prayer.

For its first year T I Vasquez Architects was surprisingly blessed with a variety of projects: a 7-storey hotel in Tagbilaran City, a resort in Samar, a gymnasium in Tangub City and an IT office interior at the Rufino Tower in Ayala Avenue. There were also residential projects in upscale Makati villages such as Dasmariñas, Magallanes and Bel-Air.

This remarkable achievement encouraged Architect Topy to upgrade to a larger office space in 1994. With the shift in location, T I Vasquez Architects faced new challenges by way of bigger, more prominent projects such as the El Nido Resorts (Redevelopment of Pangulasian Island and Lagen Island Cove 2), Pamilican Villas (located at the world's famous Amanpulo Resort) and a mall in Tagbilaran City. For the increased revenue Architect Topy and his wife Susan made a joint decision to invest in their own office condominium unit at Cityland 10 in Makati City, where the firm still holds office to this date.

In early 1996 Architect Topy was approached by Ador Bacani of Philrealty for the design of a new high-rise residential condominium building. This project, called Ivy League Square, became the firm's initial venture in the design of high-rise buildings. The increased demands of this and other upcoming projects prompted Architect Topy to invite some of his trusted colleagues to form a professional partnership. On February 1997 the firm became known as T I Vasquez Architects & Partners, or TVA&P for short. Partners include Arch. Eric Tinio and Engr. Cesar Cruz.

In 1998 the United Architects of the Philippines launched a nationwide design competition for its proposed permanent headquarters building. Architect Topy Vasquez, who loves challenges and has got plenty of time then, signed in. The board of judges for this competition is composed exclusively of past UAP national presidents. On October 2, 1998, coincidentally Architect Topy's 40th birthday, he was declared winner of this once-in-a-lifetime competition.

Still, the architect continues to expand his fields of expertise. During that same year he ventured into Industrial Design via the development of a design concept for an unconventional tricycle with an aerodynamically shaped fiberglass body and improved seating layout. As of this date, this vehicle known as 'Aerocab' has been registered with three (3) Philippine patents and several more pending applications for variant models. Actual models are already being used by some big firms for their transportation and delivery needs

TVA & Partners emerged from the regional crisis with many notable projects, among them the internationally known Panglao Island Nature Resort which never fails to earn the admiration of foreign as well as local tourists. The firm has also designed an embassy building for the Vietnam Socialist Republic and a hospital in Angeles City, aside from numerous commercial and residential buildings

Just recently, Architect Topy Vasquez joined another national design competition this time sponsored by the provincial government of Cebu, to be called the Cebu Megadome. From an initial 25 entries that included big name architects from Manila, 5 finalists were chosen and Topy was one of them. Among the judges for this competition is national artist Napoleon Abueva, and noted architects Recio and Villarosa. Nevertheless, Architect Topy Vasquez is still destined to make a name in Cebu via his current twin-tower project called the Fuente Towers. When completed, it will have 36 storeys "The Tallest Building Outside Metro Manila" and from the top floor one can enjoy a breathtaking view of the Cebu skyline.

Architect Topy Vasquez is an active member of the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen & Professionals (BCBP), of which he is the head of the Makati Chapter. He has also been serving as officer of the UAP Makati Chapter for several years now.

Today, TVA & Partners maintains affiliations with foreign designers, among them MWM Architects of the United States & Guam, Kengo Kuma & Yoshihide Tamura of Japan and the Consulting Engineering Group in Qatar and Egypt.

On its 10th anniversary, TVA & Partners has decided to forego the usual cocktail celebrations and instead came out with a fund-raising program for the purchase of new architectural reference books. These books will be donated to selected colleges of Architecture all over the Philippines. It will be TVA & Partners' contribution for the welfare of future Filipino Architects.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MANAGING PARTNER
by Ronnie Caballero

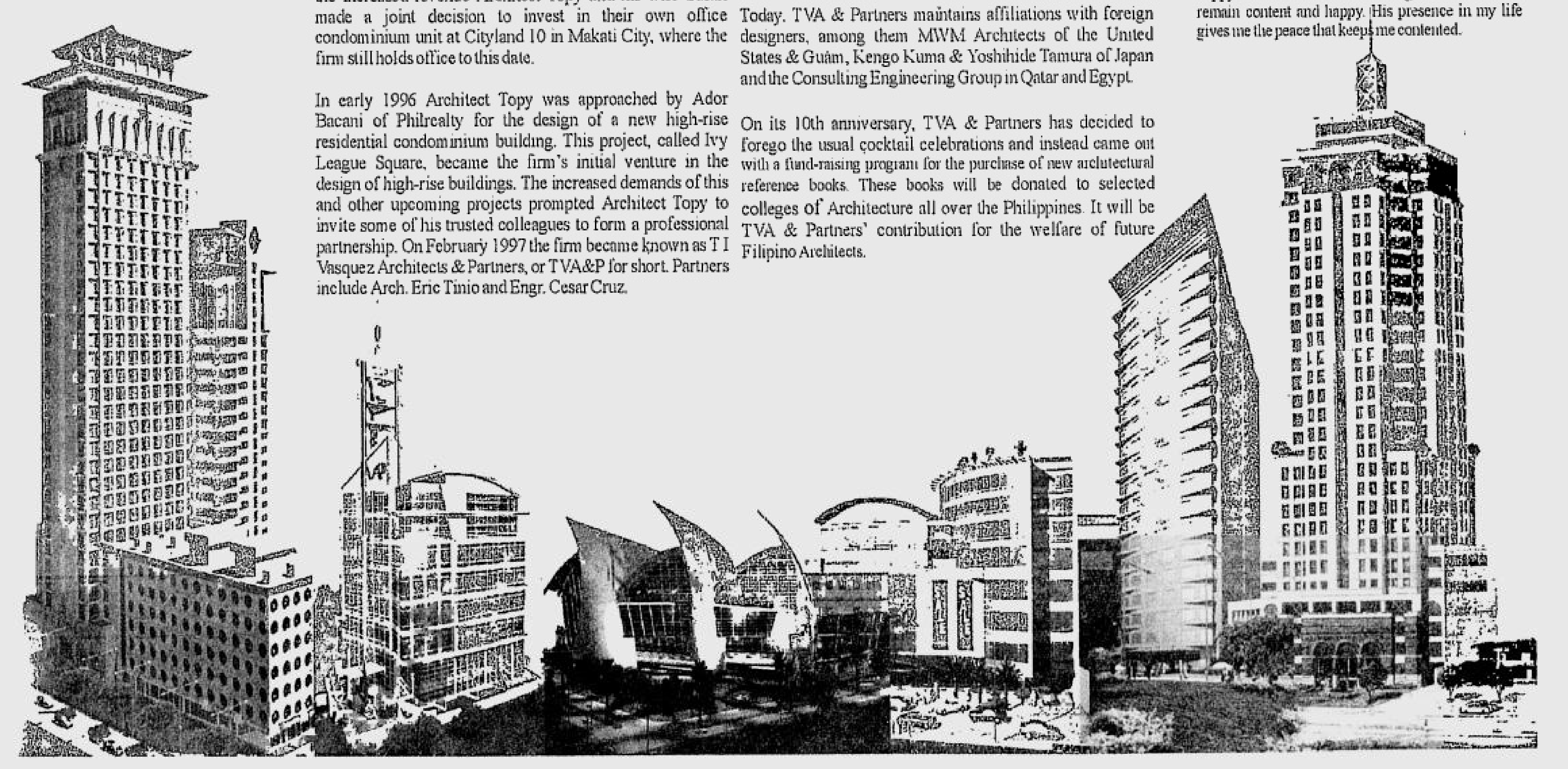
This interview was conducted by Kapatiran, a quarterly magazine of the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen & Professionals (BCBP) as part of a series to highlight professional achievements by brothers and sisters in their respective fields. Kapatiran met Bro. Topy in his 25th floor Makati office overlooking the skyline of Ayala Avenue. Portions of the interview are being reprinted here courtesy of Kapatiran magazine.

K: What made you take up architecture?
My first love is really automotive/industrial design. However, it was made clear to me that this course would be available only abroad, therefore terribly expensive. But my father who hails from Cabanatuan City had it as a dream that we would have an architectural firm along with my brothers. Of the five boys three are architects. My father had one year of architecture from Mapua Institute but was forced to stop due to poverty.

K: What particular talents helped you in the field of architecture?
I would say it is my creativity and my love for carpentry as a hobby. I see creativity as a continuous challenge. I really get caught up in conceptualization and creating. It really is the highest point of my work day. The rest, drafting and implementation becomes boring but necessary. However, every project I see as a personal challenge.

K: What makes you unique as an architect?
I never repeat a design. Everything is always original. I always love to challenge my mind. This is my uniqueness. I always try to step into the shoes of a client to understand his needs resulting in a unique design. My client's character is reflected in the personality of the house. And I never market my firm. Over the past 10 years we just wait for the phone to ring and we have always had clients.

K: Is your Christian service relevant to your profession?
Definitely. Serving the Lord has made me content in many ways. I no longer question what the Lord gives to me. If this is the house, car or education that's available at the moment to me and my family, I am happy with that. If the Lord changes that then I still remain content and happy. His presence in my life gives me the peace that keeps me contented.



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'Bike for rights'

HERE'S a new way of driving your point: Ride a bike and have some fun. Yesterday, more than 100 bikers joined a "fun run with a cause" to show support to the Anti-Torture bills which have been languishing in Congress. And for most participants and organizers, torture includes the death penalty. There are three pending anti-torture bills in Congress: Sen. Francis Pangilinan's Senate Bill 2484, Sen. Sergio Osmeña's Senate Bill 2481 and Akbayan party list Rep. Loreta Ann Rosales' House Bill 2855. Their bills seek to "criminalize" the practice of torture in the country. The bike caravan, dubbed as "bike for rights," was organized by Amnesty International Pilipinas in celebration of the Human Rights Week. The participants ranged from kids as young as 10 to senior citizens as old as 65. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

His choice if...

MANILA Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. said yesterday that if it were up to him, the death penalty law should be abolished. "That's my recommendation. It is not correct to impose capital punishment when the problems are within the system itself," he said in a phone interview. The mayor explained further that "from what I see through a pro-life principle," imposing the death penalty will not deter criminality. Atienza, however, said he understands President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to lift the moratorium on the death penalty. The President on Friday lifted the moratorium on the death penalty. The moratorium suspended judicial executions through lethal injection indefinitely. "It's a decision to uphold the law… I cannot blame her (Ms Macapagal) for following the law," said Atienza. *Tarra Quismundo*

2 cousins stabbed

FOUR cousins were walking home the other night in Quezon City. One of them never reached it alive. Domingo Gedor, 23, was stabbed dead while his cousin Cleto, 21 was seriously injured. The suspect was identified as a certain Bobby Uy. He remains at large. About 10 p.m. the other day, Domingo and Cleto were walking home with cousins Senen and Reagan Subia in Alley 4, Homemart Road, Barangay Apolonio Samson, a report from the Central Police District said. But suddenly, the suspect, armed with an icepick, ran to them. The suspect first attacked Senen, 26, and Reagan, 23. However, he missed. The two managed to run but then the suspect turned to Domingo and Cleto. They were brought to the Quezon City General Hospital but Domingo died an hour later. Cleto is still undergoing treatment. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

Do it by Dec. 15

OFFICIALS of the Bureau of Fire Protection should work double time and see to it that they're done with the inspection of business establishments before Dec. 15. This was after the Department of Interior and Local Government issued a memorandum prohibiting fire inspectors from visiting and inspecting establishments after the 15th to avoid the temptation of soliciting gifts from businessmen. DILG Undersecretary Marius Corpus, who has jurisdiction over the BFP, reiterated the existing ban on gift solicitation by government employees, especially this Yuletide season. Corpus said those caught violating the ban, especially if they are DILG personnel or employees of its attached agencies, will be administratively and criminally prosecuted. *Tina Santos*

Tragic search

HE WAS just looking for his son. But when Carlito Seriban, 44, asked a group of five people if they saw his kid, the group instead mauled him to death. Investigation showed that the incident happened about 10:30 p.m. the other day when Seriban got worried and started looking for his son. Police said Seriban's attackers appeared to be drunk. They said it was possible they were also high on drugs. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

RESIDENTS of Barangay Libis in Quezon City carry household items as well as pet animals at the height of a fire that hit their area on Saturday night. More than 120 families were left homeless. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Displaced families use avenue island as sleeping quarters

By Tarra Quismundo

IT MAY be enticing to sit on a bench at the Roxas Boulevard Baywalk and watch the Manila Bay sunset.

But a glance behind may land one's eyes on a rubber tree at the island bordering the boulevard and the service road near the Grand Boulevard Hotel, the shade of which has become shelter to some families displaced by a demolition last week.

Some 94 families have been driven out of their homes by a demolition team allegedly from the Manila City Hall last Thursday from a lot on 2088 Roxas Boulevard, in Malate, Manila.

Some of the displaced have been sleeping on the island since then. The rest have been staying at the Our Lady of Remedies Parish Center on Madre Ignacia St. corner San Andres St., in front of the Malate Catholic School.

Tet Sambale, project coordinator of the Malate Church social development program, said that 82 families are crammed on the ground floor of the four-story parish center which, she said, is not equipped to function as an evacuation center.

"We have other regular activities everyday, so while they are staying here, they would adjust within the limited space so that we can still conduct our activities," said Sambale.

Cartons and plywood

The displaced individuals, including three women who have just given birth and several babies less than a year old, use cartons and plywood for them to sleep on at night.

And save for what little the parish could provide for their food, the families, now homeless, are left to fend for themselves.

Sambale said that some of the kids have been unable to attend school. She said the elders have left their children in the parish center to go to work to have something to eat through the day.

The families were forced to leave what used to be a vacant lot on Roxas Boulevard, where some of them have been living for more than 20 years.

The relatives of Mila Papa, 38, were among the first settlers on the vacant lot in 1975.

Papa's siblings and their families also built their homes inside the compound, where other families, mostly of employees who work as waiters, cooks and janitors in hotels and restaurants along Roxas Boulevard, also found a home and put up shanties.

Vacant lot

"It was just a vacant lot that nobody claimed. Until a lawyer said that the lot was theirs," related Papa.

Sambale said that a lawyer of a certain company have been coming back for the past three years and talking the residents, that reached 110 families, into leaving the area.

But the members of the 2088 Roxas Blvd. Malate, Manila Good Neighborhood Association Inc. did not agree on leaving their homes without relocation.

"Some of the families agreed to leave for a payment of around P16,800 in June, but the rest chose to stay since they have nowhere to go," said Sambale.

When those 16 families left, the demolition team that arrived on Thursday morning had 94 more families to deal with.

"They did not have any court order. They only had a closure order for the restaurant in front of the compound," said Sambale.

Mother, son die in blaze

Another relative also killed

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

SHE COULD have been saved.

But Intang Roxas, 40, went back to their burning house to save her 6-year-old son, Manuel. In the end, both mother and son died of suffocation as fire razed their house in Caloocan City yesterday.

Their relative, Roderick Jose, 22, also died of suffocation after he failed to run out of the house. Because of his mental illness, his relatives had allegedly tied his legs so he could not move around, city fire chief Insp. Agapito Nacario told the INQUIRER.

The fire began at 3:15 p.m. in the victims' two-story house at the corner of Tatampal and Tamban alleys in Barangay Libis Tulingan. Initial reports said the fire was caused by an unattended candle.

Three Caloocan City Fire trucks rushed to the area, followed by at least eight volunteer fire trucks. However, the firefighters found it difficult to reach the house because their trucks could not pass through the small alleys.

Witnesses said that during the fire, Roxas went back to the house and up to the second floor to get her son. But then the wooden stairs of the house was already burning. The victims could not go down. Neither could Jose, whose legs were tied.

The fire was declared out at 3:50 p.m. Damages were estimated at P2 million.

In Quezon City, more than 120 families were left homeless after a two-hour fire razed a residential area in Libis the other night.

One firefighter was reported hurt after he was hit by a broken hot glass after an explosion.

Case investigator FO3 Marcus Mondia told the INQUIRER that the fire began about 7 p.m. Saturday inside a two-story house on Pasco and F. Junio Streets, Sitio 3, Barangay Libis. The house was owned by a certain Zeny Plado.

About 60 houses were razed. As of press time, fire investigators have yet to declare the estimated damage.

Universal gutted

Fire gutted the Universal Theater on Rizal Avenue yesterday morning.

Initial reports of Manila's Bureau of Fire Protection said the fire began at the second floor.

The theater has been closed since October and is being renovated.

FO3 Gaudencio Magallanes said the fire might have been caused by welding work inside the building. It said hot metal bits could have seared the flammable foams being used for the theater's sound system. *With a report from Tarra Quismundo*

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- Mr Michael Jalik got more than half a million dollars less than one month after receiving the Miraculous Water of Lourdes.
- Ms Jeanne Connell won $20,000.00 shortly after receiving the Miraculous Water of Lourdes. She gave some to her daughter, who immediately won $3,000.00.
- Only 6 hours after receiving the Miraculous Water of Lourdes, Mrs. Laura Haber, who had been experiencing financial difficulties, unexpectedly received $75,000.00

And these are just 3 examples. Three examples among thousands upon thousands of others.

Five thousand scientists who were skeptical or who didn't believe in the supernatural powers of the Miraculous Waters of Lourdes went to Lourdes to study them. And while they could not explain all the miracles they observed, they had to admit these miracles did in fact occur. They even certified that the Water of Lourdes is genuinely miraculous.

For the first time you can now receive this authentic statue of the Virgin covered in a dome filled with the Miraculous Water of Lourdes

If you cannot travel to Lourdes, France, and to these Miraculous Waters… the Miraculous Waters of Lourdes can now come to you. And they can stay with you. Not just for a few days or a few weeks. But *FOREVER*. Don't forget that *wherever* this Water goes, the limitless powers of Lourdes go with it

Each statue of the Virgin is made in Lourdes and hand-painted by talented craftsmen. Each statue is then covered with a phosphorescent mystic substance to make it glow in the dark. Then these craftsmen protect the statue in a clear protective dome filled with the Miraculous Water, taken directly from the original source in the Cave of Miracles.

Consequently, it is no surprise the value of this statue and the Miraculous Water in which it is immersed is inestimable. What's more, the source of Lourdes Water is small and the demand for its water is worldwide.

If you have any wishes you want to come true quickly, order your statue of the Virgin immersed in the Miraculous Water of Lourdes. A contribution of only P299 is requested per statue to cover its importation expense.

As president of the Lourdes Research Organization, I was able to bring some statues back with me on my return from Europe. To my knowledge, this is the first time - and perhaps the last - they are available. And quantities are very limited.

To receive one or more statues, just fill in and mail the coupon below to the indicated address. We ask a mere contribution of P299 per statue to contribute to their distribution costs (+airfreight charges, insurance and customs handling)

Unfortunately, we probably will not be able to meet all requests. To benefit from this very special offer, please sign the document appearing on the coupon. By doing so you agree merely to send us a brief letter about the fortunate and unexpected events you experience thanks to the powers of the Miraculous Waters of Lourdes surrounding your statue.

President, Lourdes Research Organization

Note: Orders will be filled a first-come, first-served basis.

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No touching, no frisking…

From page A24

QUIRER. "Anything beyond that would be illegal."

To ensure that guidelines would be strictly followed, de Leon said each checkpoint team would be headed by a PNP inspector or other higher ranking police official.

More than 10,000 policemen, backed by around 1,000 soldiers from the Armed Forces' National Capital Regional Command, will be scattered all over Metro Manila beginning today as a response to the recent rash of kidnapping incidents.

Besides manning "chokepoints," the massive contingent would also augment police visibility in densely populated areas such as shopping malls and vehicle terminals. Military personnel will be armed only with pistols to avoid antagonizing the public, de Leon said.

"The troops manning checkpoints and those pounding the beat have strict instructions to be courteous but firm to make sure that the public will not be inconvenienced," said Angelo Reyes, chief of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force.

"We are doing (these measures) for the good of the public so we have to make sure they are implemented properly," the Naktaf chief said.

SUERTRES 6 4 7
(In exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
2 3 12 19 24 32

METRO

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Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

Now, here comes the Army

By Tarra Quismundo

SOLDIERS in the streets?

Don't panic. There is no coup. The soldiers are from the Armed Forces sent to augment policemen manning checkpoints or conducting patrols in and around Metro Manila.

In Manila, 30 soldiers either from the Army's 80th Infantry Battallion or from the Marines will serve as backup for Western Police District (WPD operatives).

According to WPD director Pedro Bulaong, the soldiers will be accompanying lawmen on foot patrols in areas like Rizal Avenue and Divisoria.

"The public must be happy because they are being protected. This (reinforcement) is just an assurance of their security," Bulaong said in a phone interview.

On top of manning checkpoints and going on patrols, the soldiers would be allowed to take part in police operations and arrests, the WPD director said.

Any person to be arrested by the soldiers will be turned over to the police.

Bulaong said the soldiers would be reporting directly to the WPD for the duration of their detail there.

The WPD chief said the augmentation force would be assigned to morning and evening shifts.

The National Capital Region Police Office has announced that 10,000 policemen will be deployed all over Metro Manila to combat rising criminality.

These will be reinforced with force multipliers from the Army, the Marines, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Traffic Management Group and the barangays.

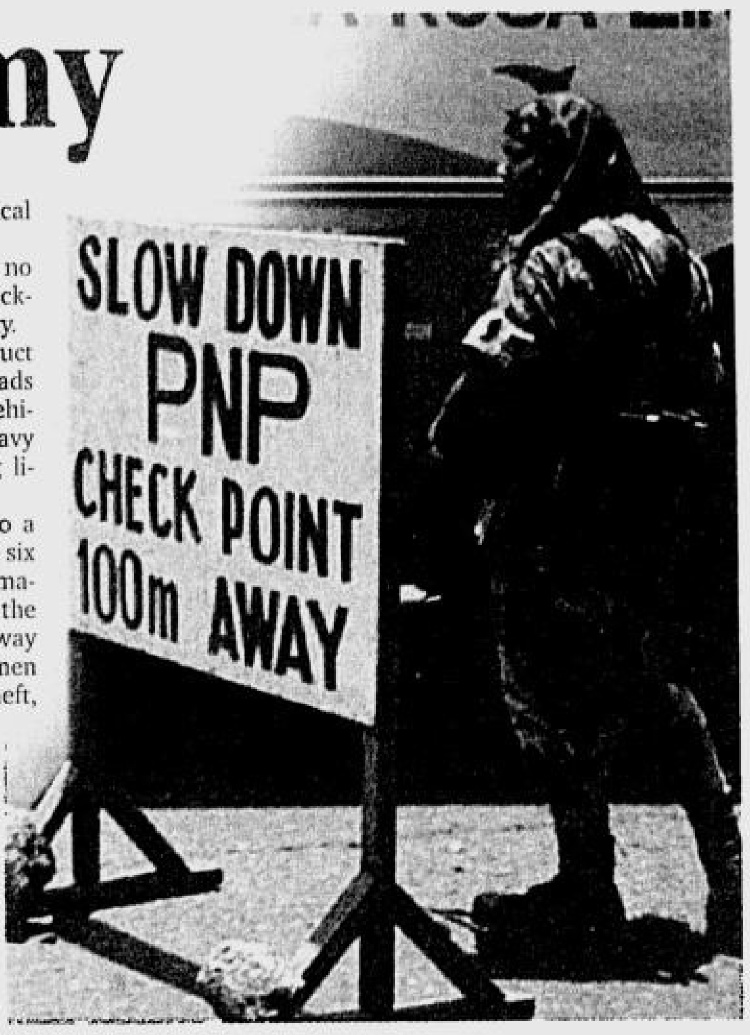
As for the WPD, Bulaong said, 85 percent of his more than 3,200 men had been sent on patrol following the consecutive reports of kidnapping and robbery in Metro Manila.

The rest, meanwhile, remain in offices to take care of clerical work.

Bulaong explained that no chokepoints or stationary checkpoints would be put up in the city.

His men will instead conduct random checks along Manila roads and streets, where suspicious vehicles, including those with heavy tinting and blurred or missing license plates, will be checked.

Such a random check led to a shootout between police and six men on board a van and a Tamaraw FX that were traversing the President Sergio Osmeña highway on Wednesday afternoon. The men were believed involved in car theft, kidnapping and robbery.



DON'T be surprised if soldiers and police in full battle gear (similar to that in this file photo) flag you down as you drive along one of Metro Manila's roads. They are part of measures to thwart criminality in the metropolis.

No touching, no frisking at checkpoints

By Christian Esguerra

THE PHILIPPINE National Police yesterday said it would be much stricter with its men who would violate rules on the conduct of checkpoints than with motorists who would be affected by this stringent security measure.

Director Ricardo de Leon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, urged the public to report any discourtesy or violation committed either by policemen or military officers manning checkpoints.

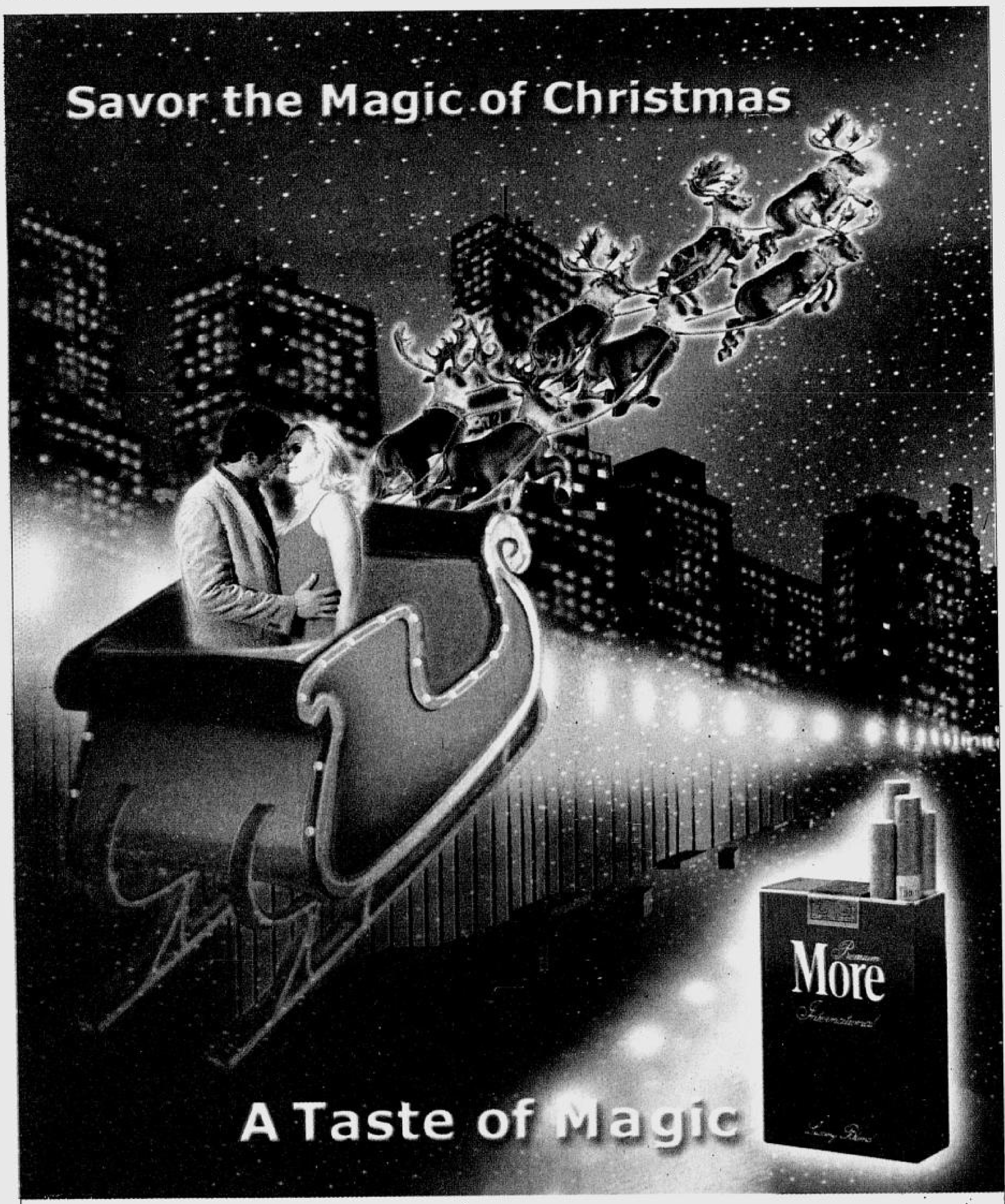
He said reports may by coursed through the nearest police station or the 117 hotline.

Despite the urgency of locating criminal elements, particularly kidnappers, de Leon said authorities could not compromise the public's convenience and safety by having police or military officers going beyond the bounds of checkpoint operations.

Frisking at checkpoints is illegal and no member of the PNP or the Armed Forces is allowed to fire warning shots even if vehicles refuse to pull over, the NCRPO chief said.

"Every thing will involve only visual searching," he told the INQUIRER.

NO TOUCHING/A23



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Lawman gets taste of rising lawlessness

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

EVEN policemen are not spared.

A rookie Malabon City lawman lost his motorcycle Saturday while another lawman in Quezon City lost his gun, clothes and about $100 after robbers broke into his car.

PO1 Armando Sandil, 32, detailed in Malabon City, parked his maroon motorcycle (US 4801) in front of a car battery store on M.H. Del Pilar Street, Tugatog, about 4:30 a.m. Saturday.

When he got back, his motorcycle was gone.

At about 6 a.m. in Quezon City, Supt. Jesus Zapata of the Camp Crame Headquarters Support Group discovered that the window of his Nissan Sentra car was broken.

The car was parked in front of Zapata's house on Aurora Boulevard, Barangay Duyan Duyan, Project 3.

When he looked inside, Zapata found that his .45-caliber pistol, his bag of clothes, several documents including his address book and identification cards, as well as $100 and P150 were gone.

Policemen have been warning motorists to be careful when leaving their cars unattended as the police predicted a surge in theft cases with the Christmas season.

In the CAMANAVA (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela) for instance, most of the recorded stolen vehicles were carted away while these were parked unattended.

Out of the 69 reported car theft, 49 were stolen while they were parked unattended.

White slavery ring busted by NBI agents

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has cracked a human trafficking gang that has sent to Malaysia more than 30 Filipino women who are believed to have ended up in a white slavery den.

The busting of the suspected white slavery ring came with the arrest of one Josie Ubaldo of Tarlac and the identification of two others as Teddy Amon and Alice Carilla.

According to the NBI, one of the gang's prospective victims, Grace Soriano, reported that she got a text message from one of the girls earlier sent by Ubaldo to work as entertainers in a club in Labuan, Malaysia.

The girl in Malaysia claimed that she and other recruits were being forced to take Ecstacy and shabu and then sold to customers for sex.

The Anti-Human Trafficking Division of the NBI then set an entrapment operation against Ubaldo.

According to the NBI, the gang promises recruits P18,000 as monthly salary for working as entertainers in a certain Club Planet.

No placement fees are asked, only a P600 transport fare to Zamboanga City, from where the recruits are sent to Malaysia.

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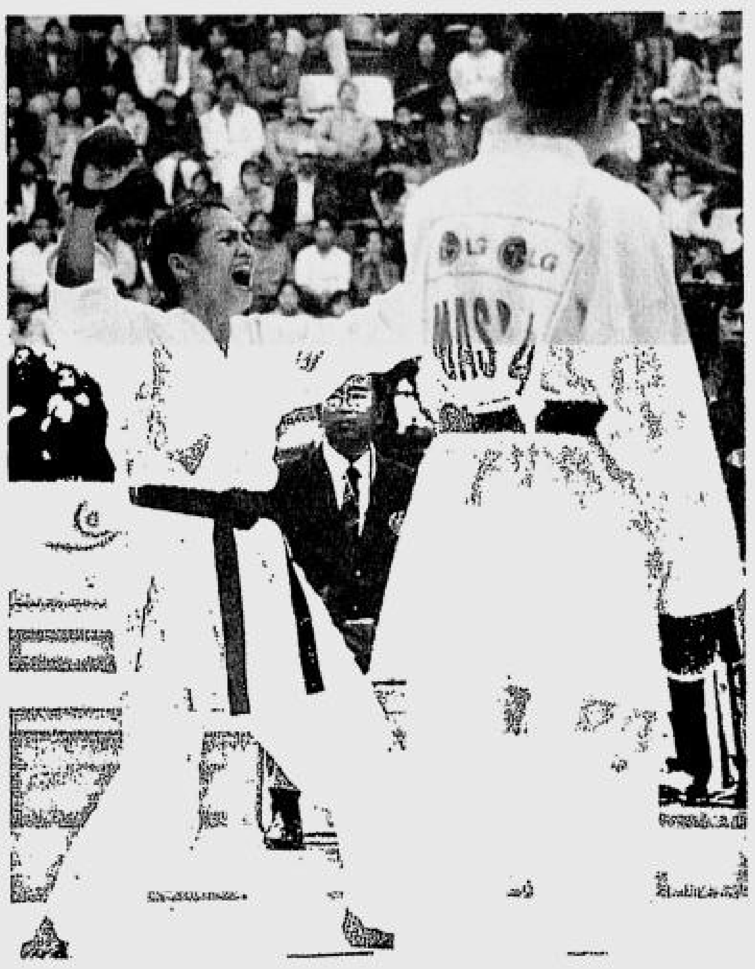

BETTER THAN A BEAUTY TITLE Karateka Gretchen Malalad (above left) celebrates her victory in the 60-kg final against Malaysian rival Ai Lee Chua in Hanoi's Gia Lam Gymnasium.

EDWIN BACASMAS

MOST PRODUCTIVE DAY

Buenavista, Malalad lead 7-gold RP haul

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Runner Eduardo Buenavista and pretty karateka Gretchen Malalad delivered as expected to spark what became a seven-gold Sunday for the Philippines in its scrambling bid to keep up with the traditional powerhouses in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

BUENAVISTA/ A26

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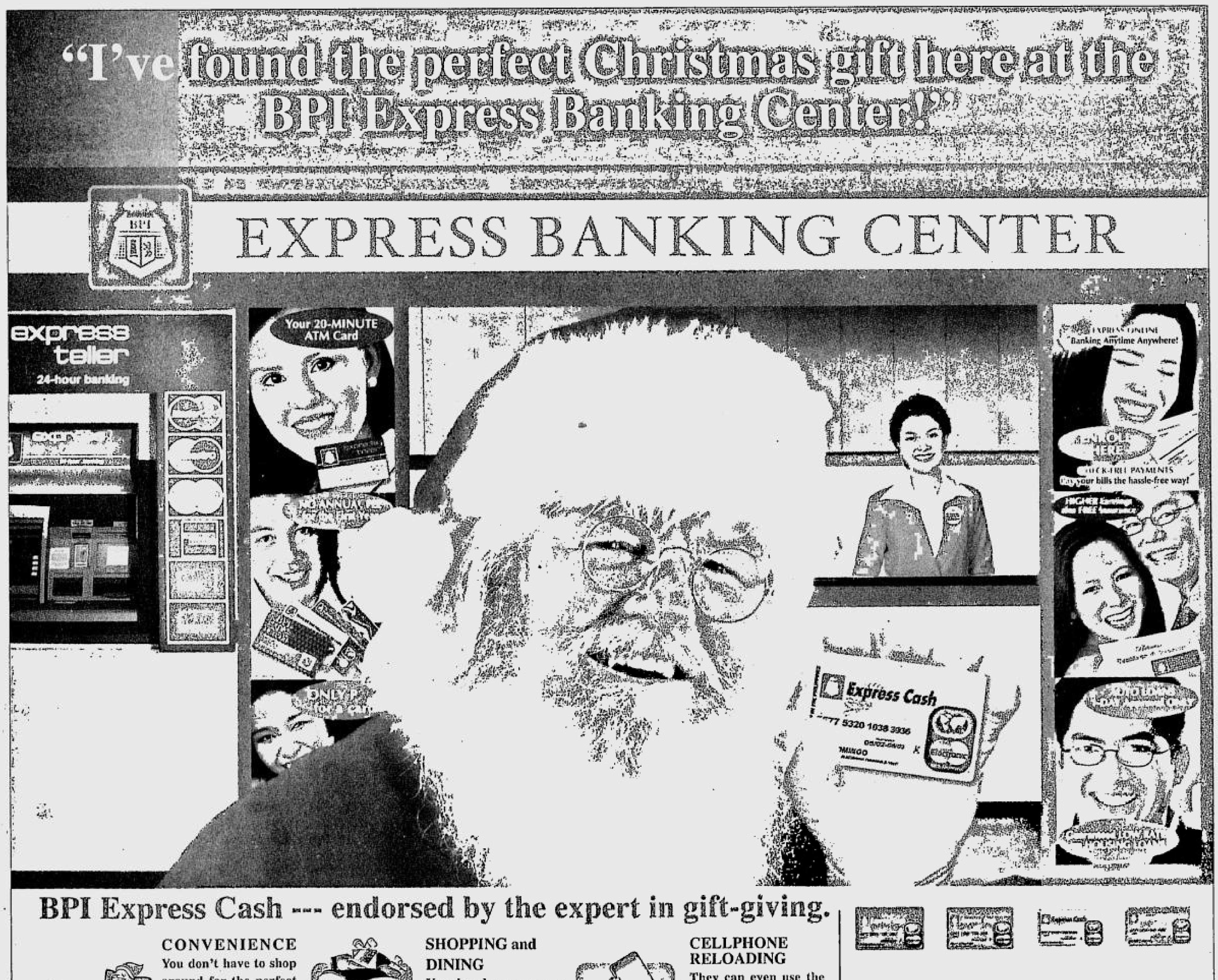
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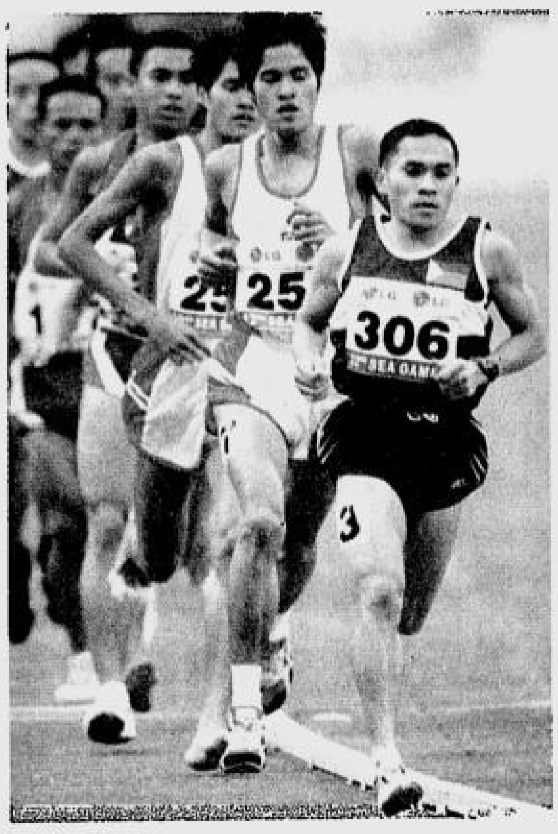


DIMINUTIVE Eduardo Buenavista tows the field in the early laps of the 10,000 meters. The Filipino long-distance ace missed his RP record but smashed the old SEAG mark in winning the gold medal. AP

Braveheart Buenavista strikes

Long-distance marvel scoops 1st of 3 expected golds

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Alone in his class.

Showing why he's the region's long distance king, Eduardo Buenavista overwhelmed the field in the 10,000 meters Sunday to win the first athletics gold for the Philippines in record-breaking fashion in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

The 25-year-old from Banga, South Cotabato, lapped all but three of the eight runners who came to challenge him, clocking a SEAG record 29 minutes 19.61 seconds in the first of three lung-busting events he wants to win after scoring a 3,000-5,000 double two years ago in Malaysia.

The overpowering victory came on the heels of another Filipino show in the men's 400 meters as defending champion Ernie Candelario and teammate Jimar Aing both ruled their heats impressively.

Candelario clocked 46.68 in the second heat while Aing did 46.96.

Both runners are mainstays of the men's 4x400-relay team that is also expected to contribute to what athletics president Go Teng Kok said would be a 10-12 golden harvest this time. Athletics made off with nine golds in 2001.

Barely over five feet but blessed with durable legs and steel lungs, Buenavista goes for the 3,000 steeplechase gold Monday and after two days of rest tries to complete the long-distance hat-trick on Thursday in the 5,000 meters.

No male runner has won three individual track golds since this competition became known as the SEAG when the Philippines and Indonesia became members in 1977.

Joining Buenavista in Monday's 3,000 is Rene Herrera, who could make it a 1-2 finish for RP as he was a strong fourth in last Asian championship in Manila last September.

A gold-silver performance is also in the works with Candelario and Aing going for the 400-meter gold before the steeplechase.

Also seeing action Monday are Sean Guevarra in the high jump, Joebert Delicano in the men's triple jump, John Lozada in the men's 1,500m and Mercedita Manipol in the women's 10,000m.

Buenavista, who broke the RP record by over a minute when he first ran the 10,000 in the Asian Games last year, pulled away halfway through the 25-lap event and ran a lonely race from there.

The old record for the event was 29:47.79, but he was nowhere near his national mark of 29:02.36 mainly because he was unpressed.

Aung Thu Ya of Myanmar placed second in 29:40.28 while Boonthung Srisung of Thailand took the bronze in 29:49.63.

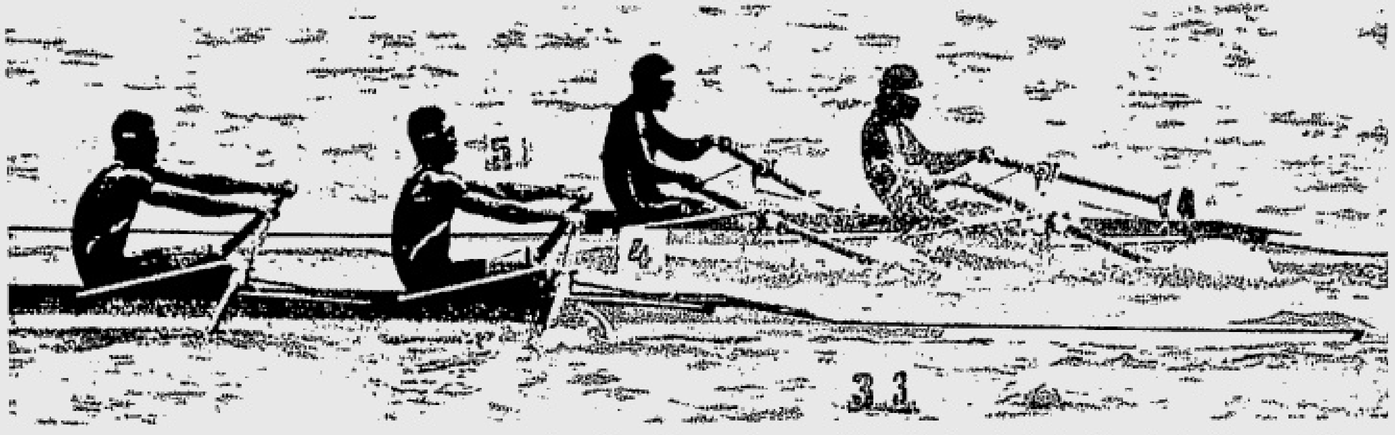
Julius Sermona, the other Filipino in the small field, placed sixth in 30:34.29.

Earlier, rookies Ralph Waldy Soguilon and Arnold Villarube failed to advance in the men's 100 meters. Soguilon clocked 10.78 and Villarube 10.99.

MOST PRODUCTIVE DAY

RP bets pluck 7 golds

From page A25



FILIPINO rowers Albert Amposta and Nestor Cordova (lane 4) cross the payoff line third in the finals of men's doubles sculls in Hanoi's West Lake. Below left, Victor Espiritu grabs the silver in individual trials in Bac Ninh province. KARL SUMBELING, EDWIN BACASMAS

After contributing a gold Saturday, the judokas added two more late in the night through the veteran John Baylon and Gilbert Ramirez after Ryan Rexel Fabriga captured the men's 10-meter platform title.

And Mark Paragua picked up a second gold in partnership with GMs Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor and Jayson Gonzales as they ruled the men's team gold in rapid chess by nipping Vietnam in a playoff.

Lee Vann Corteza became the second Filipino double gold medalist by pulling off a superb victory in the 8-ball individual finals over his Malaysian rival. That gave the powerful billiards and snookers' team its second gold in the competitions after Corteza and Warren Kiamko's triumph in the 9-ball doubles.

Boxers Juanito Magliquian, Roel Laguna and Mark Melligen also moved within a win of clinching golds in their respective divisions, but Chris Camat failed to join them after going down to Thai Somlai Chimlum.

It was the most productive day for the Filipinos who now have 10 golds to match the golden collection of Malaysia and Singapore. Just a gold ahead of them was Indonesia.

As Vietnam steadily pulled away with 41 golds, Thailand moved up with a second-best gold tally with 17.

The tiny but iron-lunged Buenavista was in a class of his own as he launched his bid for a long-distance hat-trick by winning the 10,000 meters in a SEAG record time of 29 minutes 19.61 seconds.

Malalad, a former Bb. Pilipinas candidate, survived a knockdown and a busted lower lip in clinching the gold medal in the over 60-kg division of women's kumite (sparring) by nosing out Ailee Chua of Malaysia, 4-3.

"This (gold) is better than a beauty title," Malalad later said.

Baylon, 38, became the winningest Filipino judoka as he beat Indonesia's Jimmy Anggoro for a record seventh straight title in the 81kg category.

The 19-year-old Ramirez from Zambales prevailed in the 73-kg class at the expense of Myanmar's Yan Nang Soe.

Fabriga, an 18-year-old who competed in the US Speedo FINA Diving Grand Prix in Houston this year, scored 598.65 points in giving his sport its first gold in the SEAG.

The expected golds in swimming from Miguel Molina became a silver and a bronze.

The Filipinos wound up with five silvers and 11 bronzes for the day.

Sheila Mae Perez placed second in the women's springboard 3-meter in diving and former bikathon champion Victor Espiritu improved to No. 2 this time in the 39-km individual time trial.

Buenavista lapped all but three of the nine riders who dared to challenge him early in the 25-lap race. He was a lonely runner halfway through the longest event in the track schedule.

The 5-foot-7 Malalad, the defending champion, absorbed a foul punch that sent her down on her haunches and bloodied her lower lip. That gave her a point and she took a 2-0 lead that the Malaysian wiped out with a rally.

But the brave Filipina, wiping the blood off her kisser, came back to score twice more before the Malaysian connected with what proved to be the final point in the dying seconds of the exciting match.

Malalad then rushed to his teammates and coaches after hugging Italian trainer Romano Guiseppe.

Molina, who led in the morning eliminations of the men's 200 individual medley and the men's 100 freestyle, again ran into superior opposition in the finals.

A member of the ill-fated freestyle relay team, Molina again fell victim to Thailand's Ratapong Sirasanont in the 200 IM, who nosed him out in the 400 IM Saturday.

Molina clocked 2:05.57 behind Ratapong who won in a SEAG record 2:03.54 after qualifying last in the morning in 2:24.49. Molina wound up third in the 100 free in 52.85.

Also shooting for the gold later tonight was Lee Van Corteza in 8-ball singles.

Espiritu, the Marlboro Tour champion in 1996, clocked 52 minutes 38.544 seconds for the 39-km route as he improved on his bronze finish two years ago in Malaysia.

The silver medalist in 2001, Vietnam's Mai Cong Hieu, succeeded the absent Susanto of Indonesia as champion, winning in 52:02.192.

The rowers all but drowned in Hanoi's West Lake, struggling to salvage two bronze medals.

Benjamin Tolentino placed third in the singles sculls like Emilou Babanto and Maria Concepcion Fornea in the double sculls.

The third bronze came through Tac Padilla, who shot 664.3 points in the 25-meter rapid fire pistol.

Also going for another athletics gold Monday are Ernie Candelario and Jimar Aing in the men's 400 meters. Candelario, the defending champion, and Aing topped their respective heats in 46.68 and 46.96, respectively.

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RP SCHEDULE

Monday, December 8, 2003

HANOI

Swimming (National Water Sports Palace)
All Heats
9 a.m.—Men's 100 freestyle (Juan Miguel Mendoza, Miguel Molina)
Women's 100 back (Luica Dacanay, Lizza Danila)
Men's 100 back (Raphael Grabador, Louie Marquez)
Women's 200 fly (Luica Dacanay)
Men's 100 fly (Lambert Gumba, Juan Carlo Piccio)
Women's 800 freestyle (Lizza Danila, Marichi Gandionco)
Men's 4 x 100 freestle relay (Mark Kalaw, Lambert Gumba, Miguel Molina, Raphael Grabador
6 p.m.—Finals (**Note: RP sked depends on heat results**)
Diving (National Aquatics Sports Center)
Preliminary
9 a.m.—Women's 10m Platform (cesell Domenios, Sheila Mae Perez)
10 a.m.—Men's 3m Springboard (Zardo Domenios)
3 p.m.—Finals (Note: RP sked depends on preliminary results)
Shooting (National Sports Training Center)
9 a.m.—Women's 10m Air Pistol, 40 shots (Susan Aguado, Therese Cantada, Luz Samaco)
Men's 50m Free Pistol, 60 sots (Gilbert Escobar, Carolino Gonzales, Marcelo Gonzales)
Men's Trap (Eric Ang, Jethro Dionisio, Jaime Recio)
Women's Trap (Gay Corral)
Volleyball (Nam Dinh/Ninh Dinh)
2 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (men)
Philippines vs Vietnam (women)
Athletics (National Main Stadium)
9 a.m.—Heptathlon's long jump, javelin throw, 800m run (Narcisa Atienza)
400 hurdle, heats (Julie Forbes)
3 p.m.—Men's high jump, finals (Sean Guevara)
Men's triple jump, finals (Joebert Delicano)
400m run (Jimar Aing, Ernie Candelario)
Men's 3000 steeplechase (Eduardo Buenavista, Rene Herrera)
Women's 100m run (Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito)
Men's 100m run (Ralph Soguilon, Arnold Villarube)
Men's 1500m run—John Lozada, Rene Herrera
Men's 4 x 100m relay (Jimar Aing, Henry Dagmil, Alex Gabito, Ralph Soguilon, Arnold Villarube)
Women's 4 x 100 relay (Julie Forbes, Mary Grace Milgar, Marestella Torres, Lerma Gabito)
Sepak Takraw (Hai Ba Tung Competition Hall)
9 a.m.—Philippines vs Thailan (Women)
3 p.m.—Philippines vs Thailand (men)
Canoeing (West Lake)
Heats
9 a.m.—1000m K1, (Jonathan Villarino)
1000 C1, men (Carmelito Decasin)
1000K1, women (April Mae Penalosa)
1000K2, men (Jonathan Villarino, Ronald Ylanan)
1000 K2, women (Janet Escalona, April Mae Penalosa)
3 p.m.—semifinals
Wrestling (Ho Tay Province Competition Hall)
9 a.m.—Violeto Agustin vs Nguyen Van Bien, Vietnam (48kg), Michael Baletin vs Muhamad Hajir, Indonesia (74kg), Can Van Thuc, Vietnam vs Marciano Basas (84kg), Margarito Angana vs Nuth Serevuth, Cambodia (51kg), Ari Susanto, Indonesia vs Wilfredo Mendez (55kg), Muripin SG, Indonesia vs Roel Pacional (66kg).
3 p.m.—Michael Baletin vs Narong Chonsin, Thailand (74kg), Nguen Van Duc, Vietnam vs Marcus Valda (96kg), Margarito Angana vs Sunan Nunsang, Thailand (51 kg), Khomratanakakmony, Cambodia vs Wilfredo Mendez (55kg), Melchor Tumasis vs Thanej Suwanna, Thailand (60kg).
Karatedo (Gia Lam Competition Hall)
9 a.m.—Lutche Metante, women's individal kumite, open
10 a.m.—Ryan Mariano, men's individual kumite, open
11 a.m.—Bernardino Chu, men's individual kumite, 55 kg
12 noon—Ireneo Toribio, men's individual kumite, 60 kg
2 p.m.—Mama Pabillore, women's individual kumite, 53 kg.
Gymnastics (Hanoi Sports Palace)
2 p.m.—Floor exercises (men), vault (women), pommel horse (men), uneven bars (women), rings (men), vault (men), balance beam (women), parallel bars (men), floor exercises (women), horizontal bar (men)
Pencak Silat (Police Academy Gymnasium)
9 a.m.—Tanding (men and women), tunggal (women), ganda double (men), regu (men)

HAISHUNG

Table Tennis (Hai Dung Province Gym)
9 a.m.—Men's team (Joselito Almazan, Joseph Cruz, Ernesto Ebuen, Richard Gonzales)/Women's team (Sendrina Balatbat, Arlene Borja, Chrisma Capistrano, Mary Louise Tabulao)

HO CHI MINH

Tennis (Lan Anh Club—Dist. 10)
9 a.m.—Team, men and women (**Note: RP sked depends on earlier round results**)
Adelo Abadia, Johnny Arcilla, Rolando Ruel, Joseph Victorino/Czarina Mae Arevalo, Alysa Anne Labay, Anna Patricio Santos
Individual, men and women (first, second rounds)
Johanny Arcilla, Czarina Mae Arevalo, Anna Patricia Santos
Badminton (Tan Binh Indoor Stadium)
9:30 a.m.—Women's team final (**Note: RP sked depends on earlier round results**)
Kennie Asuncion, Rachel Guerrero, Raquel Guerrero, Paula Obanana
6:30 p.m.—Men's team final (**Note: RP sked depends on earlier round results**)
Arolas Amahit, Kennivic Asuncio, Lloyd Escoses, Melvin Llanes, Ian Gil Piencenaves
Billiards/Snooker (Nguyen Du Spots Center)
10 a.m.—Snooker team, semifinals (**RP sked depends on earlier round results**) PartieLibre, semifinals (**RP sked depends on earlier round results**)
7:30 p.m.—Snooker team, finals (**RP sked depends on earlier round results**)
Partie Libre finals (**RP sekd depends on earlier round results**)
9-ball pool singles (Efren Reyes/Francisco Bustamante)
Judo (Lanh Binh Thang Competition Hall)
3 p.m.—Sydney Schwarzkopf vs Anantasak Sukit, Thailand (90kg)
Alqadir Ekong vs Wee Pui Seng, Singapore (100kg)
6 p.m.—Karen Ann Solomon (70kg)
Chess (Van Don Indoor Stadium)
4:30 to 8:30 p.m.—Standard, round 1, men and women
Rogelio Antonio Jr., Ronald Dableo, Mark Paragua, Eugenio Torre, Buenaventura Villamayor/Arianne Caoili, Kathryn Ann Cruz, Sherrie Joy Lomibao, Cristine Mariano, Beverly Mendoza.
Boxing (Phan Dinh Phung Stadium)
7 p.m.—Semifinals
Harry Tanamor s Nguyen The Hai, Vietnam, 48kg
Joan Tipon vs Unas Arenaldo Moniaga, Indonesia, 54 kg
Florencio Ferrer vs Marwan Muling, Indonesia, 60kg

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MEDAL TALLY

	G	S	B	T
Vietnam	41	14	17	72
Thailand	17	26	28	71
Indonesia	11	13	14	38
Malaysia	10	13	14	37
Singapore	10	12	12	34
Philippines	11	11	25	47
Myanmar	2	12	15	29
Cambodia	1	0	3	4
Laos	0	1	1	2
Brunei	0	0	3	3
East Timor	0	0	0	0

Salute to Ho Chi Minh, or lessons for the Pinoy

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HANOI—The accomplished poet Krip Yuson is right, the place is Frenchy.

Mornings here are clear, cold and lovely.

This is not the Paris of Hemingway's poor but very happy expat years. It's winter now, but there's no need to gather wood or buy coal to keep you warm in your room.

No snow here, but you also shiver out in the cold morning air.

Maybe it's no plain coincidence that the gods of sports have chosen this cool, charming capital to help the Filipino rediscover the old winning ways of his great ancestors.

All the visitor has to do is move out of the busy, tree-lined main avenue in Ba Dinh District, now clogged with a swarming boil of citizens on board assorted motorcycles, walk into an interior road, for a trip two generations back to an original marketplace that's totally unspoiled by shallow, frantic commerce.

Organic fruits, vegetable, fresh water fish, shells, shrimps, native chickens, meat are displayed on the sidewalk at prices even the simplest of folks could afford. Some of the goods appear to have been gathered from the wilderness.

This is indeed a place where the Filipino could recover bits of his original self from the ways of a noble, unbending people that have refused to be towed by foreign power and influence.

***

One recent visitor from Manila, a young female journalist, had complained that she did not enjoy Hanoi.

No big malls out there, she informed through a text message the other day.

She was right, and wrong at the same time.

There's indeed no great shopping place.

But then, there's also no evident rush here to join the rat race.

Staying as pure, strong as an unbending people is one of the greatest traits the Vietnamese have obviously inherited from Ho Chi Minh, who declared independence from France in 1945 before shaming and throwing out the Americans in a national uprising punctuated by the fall of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in 1975.

***

No malls, no great shopping departments.

There's also an amazing excess of motorcycles, maybe as numerous as citizens themselves, on the main roads.

But, after the roar of machines on the road, the next thing that strikes the visitor from Manila is the general leanness of local citizens, both male and female.

These people are clearly content with what they produce and what they have.

As a result, there's an absence of excess poundage.

No overweight people as a whole, and as could only be expected, there are no shops here offering facelifts or liposuction treatment.

***

What this city obviously needed were traffic signal lights.

It's generally to each his own, as the few rs, the countless motorbikes, the strolling izens go their separate ways.

They roll on ahead, cut paths, weave through traffic island breaks in a perpetual, perplexing maze.

People, a great mass of them, jostle, rush, mingle, move in an out of theirs and others' assigned ways.

You see, if this strange, singular traffic system were, say, allowed in Manila or New York, the population in both cities would have been greatly decimated due to fatal accidents.

But Hanoi happens to be a city that needs traffic lights but which has amusingly refused to avail of these devices.

***

People just move about seemingly guided by secret, built-in antennas, not unlike bats.

Or they could be pigeons with inborn homing instincts.

There's trouble-free mayhem, the only kind in the world.

Imagine Django Bustamante breaking, in a single one crack, two 15-ball sets on the billiard table with no two balls colliding against each other, and you have an idea of the happy traffic system here.

Citizens continuously walk or cross head-on into each other's path, but generally there's been no collision.

They do blow horns, incessantly, but there's no selfish shriek.

They are in hurry, but are never mad, frantic.

What goes on daily in the city roads here is indeed one of the miracles of the world of socialism.

And Filipinos, mainly our athletes and sports officials here, should wonder how great things would have been for them had they had the selfless Ho Chi Minh, instead of the ____ Ferdinand Marcos, to lead them in those challenging times of crucial change.

Anyway, as things stand back home, two Filipinos are eternally in danger of colliding against each other even if they happen to be the only ones left driving on the same road.

More so if they happen to be selfishly involved in either sports or politics.

More SEA Games reports on pages A28 and A29

Hatfield shines as Coke ties series

SAN Miguel Beer's Dondon Hontiveros fakes off Rob Wainwright of Coca-Cola in last night's game. The Tigers won, 87-84. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By June Navarro

GAME TODAY (Cuneta Astrodome)
7 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Coca-Cola (Game 5)

RUDY Hatfield knocked in a huge three-pointer and put up a defensive gem in the dying seconds to lift Coca-Cola to a stirring 87-84 triumph over San Miguel Beer last night in Game 4 of the Samsung-PBA Reinforced Conference Finals at the Araneta Coliseum.

Hatfield justified his conference MVP award by nailing the triple with 49 ticks left that broke an 84 deadlock and then capped his heroics with a block on Dondon Hontiveros' potential game-tying trey at the buzzer.

"What a lucky win. We're very fortunate Rudy hit that shot and stopped the three-pointer of Hontiveros," said Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes, whose Tigers wasted a double-digit lead in the fourth period before eking out the win.

The Tigers equalized the series at 2-2 and reduced the series to a best-of-three affair.

Tee McClary, coming off a one-game suspension togethern with SMB's Danny Ildefonso, did a splendid job in the first three quarters but sputtered in the end due to exhaustion and fatigue.

"We played great three-fourths of the way but lost composure in the last six minutes. It was combination of fatigue and pressure," said Reyes.

The Tigers led, 73-62, entering the fourth when Dorian Peña and Ildefonso hammered their beefy frames inside as the Beermen razed Coca-Cola's sizeable lead.

Their formidable combination gave the Beermen an 82-81 edge after a long scoreless spell by the Tigers.

McClary exploded for 34 points but was limited to a free throw basket in the payoff period at the height on the Beermen's offensive onslaught.

Kwan Johnson, who recovered from a left groin injury in Game 1, paced the Beermen with 19 points but was a non-factor in the end as the locals took up the scoring cudgels.

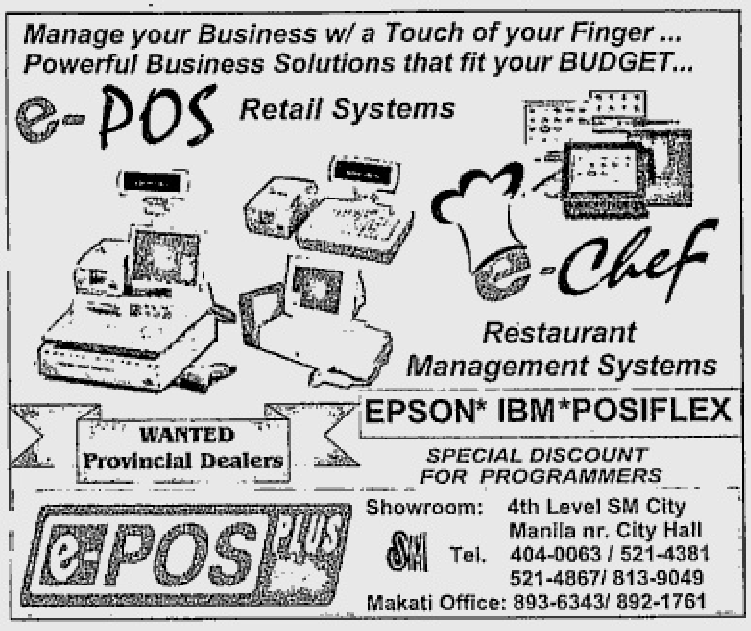
McClary sizzled in the second period, draining 16 points in that span as the Tigers crawled from 11 points down to knot the count at 45 after two quarters.

Scores:

COCA-COLA 87—McClary 34, Hatfield 16, Reavis 12, Wainwright 9, Hawkins 7, Juinio 3, Cariaso 3, Morano 3, Abarrientos 0.

SAN MIGUEL 84—Johnson 19, Ildefonso 19, Pena 14, Racela 11, Hontiveros 7, Belasco 7, Victoria 5, Mente 2.

Quarters: 21-24, 45-45, 73-62, 87-84.



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Seven-man Sulpicio quint halts Lhuillier

OZAMIZ CITY—An undermanned Sulpicio Lines-Pampanga squad uncorked a 12-0 blast late in the game to snap M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu's six-game winning streak in the 2003 Panasonic-National Basketball League Regional Cup tournament, 90-77, Friday at the Gov. Angel N. Median gym here.

New recruit Louie Aquino scattered 31 points to power the seven-man Raging Bulls to their second win in six games in the tournament also sponsored by Beer na Beer, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, BJ Star Logistics and Molten Basketball.

Despite the loss, the Cebuanos gained an automatic berth in the semifinal round as the No. 1 team.

The Ilocos Sur Snipers spilled Restolax/Mail & More-MayniLA, 95-86, in the other game to match Lhuillier's 6-1 record.

The Raging Bulls leaned on Aquino to grab the upper hand, 64-55, in the third and kept the lead, 61-55, going into the final canto.

Scores:

FIRST GAME

PAMPANGA 90—Aquino 31, Gomez 14, Yambao 11, Marucot 9, Pua 9, Pile 8, Tolentiono 8.

LHUILLIER 77—Enriquez 15, Cantona 12, Laygo 12, Dela Rosa 10, Dacia 6, Smith 4, Caputolan 4, Lumantas 4, Marata 4, Aying 3, Ocanada 3, Canoneo 0, Reyes 0, Rodriguez 0.

Quarters:16-23, 40-43, 61-55, 90-77.

SECOND GAME

ILOCOS SUR 95—Evans 29, Reyes 19, Agapito 15, Ferreria 11, Machica 7, Barbosa 6, Butel 4, Gumpenberger 3, Quitoriano 2, Silona 0, Palma 0, Cabradilla 0, Tadeo 0, Yulo 0.

MAYNILA 86—Epondulan 26, Sanz 12, Serrano 10, Mallari 9, Buendia 8, Malabanan 7, Ricafuente 5, Salvador 3, Garcia 2, Corbin 2, Roldan 2, Manucat 0, Alabanza 0, Caceres 0.

Quarters: 20-11, 43-33, 61-51, 95-86.

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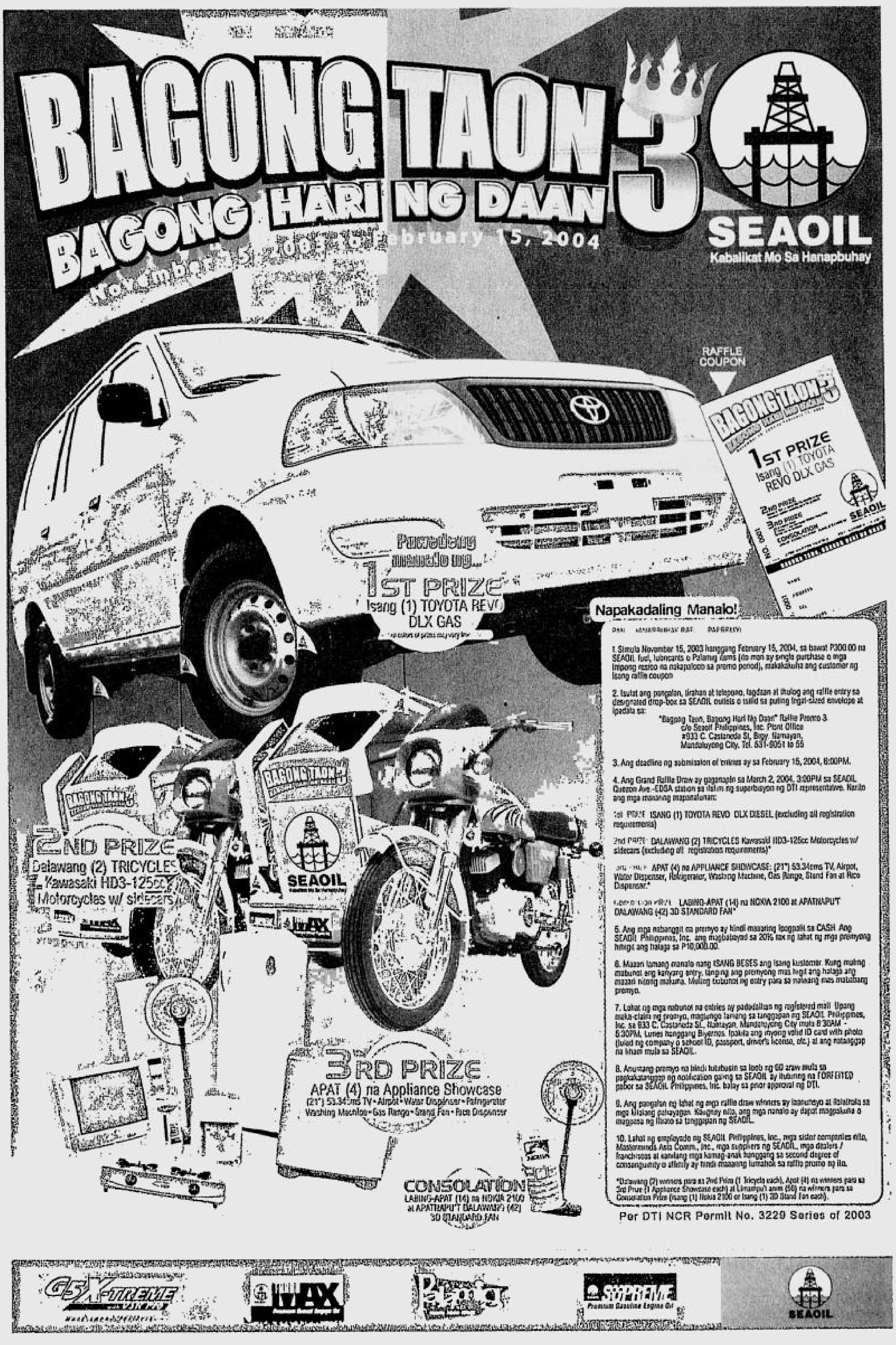

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CONSOLATION LABING-APAT (14) na NOKIA 2100 at APATNAPU'T DALAWANG (42) 3D STANDARD FAN

Napakadaling Manalo!

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Mandaluyong City. Tel. 531-8051 to 55

3. Ang deadline ng submission of entries ay sa February 15, 2004, 6:00PM.

4. Ang Grand Raffle Draw ay gaganapin sa March 2, 2004, 3:00PM sa SEAOIL Quezon Ave.-EDSA station sa ilalim ng superbisyon ng DTI representative. Narito ang mga maaaring mapanalunan:

1st PRIZE ISANG (1) TOYOTA REVO DLX DIESEL (excluding all registration requirements)

2nd PRIZE DALAWANG (2) TRICYCLES Kawasaki HD3-125cc Motorcycles w/ sidecars (excluding all registration requirements)*

3rd PRIZE APAT (4) na APPLIANCE SHOWCASE: (21") 53.34cms TV, Airpot, Water Dispenser, Refrigerator, Washing Machine, Gas Range, Stand Fan at Rice Dispenser.*

Consolation PRIZE LABING-APAT (14) na NOKIA 2100 at APATNAPU'T DALAWANG (42) 3D STANDARD FAN*

5. Ang mga nabanggit na premyo ay hindi maaaring ipagpalit sa CASH. Ang SEAOIL Philippines, Inc. ang magbabayad sa 20% tax ng lahat ng mga premyong hihigit ang halaga sa P10,000.00.

6. Maaari lamang manalo nang ISANG BESES ang isang kustomer. Kung muling mabunot ang kanyang entry, tanging ang premyong mas higit ang halaga ang maaari nitong makuha. Muling bubunot ng entry para sa nalalabing mas mababang premyo.

7. Lahat ng mga nabunot na entries ay padadalhan ng registered mail. Upang maka-claim ng premyo, magtungo lamang sa tanggapan ng SEAOIL Philippines, Inc. sa 033 C. Castaneda St., Namayan, Mandaluyong City mula 8:30AM - 5:30PM, Lunes hanggang Biyernes. Ipakita ang inyong valid ID card with photo (tulad ng company o school ID, passport, driver's license, etc.) at ang natanggap na liham mula sa SEAOIL.

8. Anumang premyo na hindi tutubusin sa loob ng 60 araw mula sa pagkakatanggap ng notification galing sa SEAOIL ay ituturing na FORFEITED pabor sa SEAOIL Philippines, Inc. batay sa prior approval ng DTI.

9. Ang pangalan ng lahat ng mga raffle draw winners ay isasapubliko at ilalathala sa mga kilalang pahayagan. Kaugnay nito, ang mga nanalo ay dapat magpakuha o magpasa ng litrato sa tanggapan ng SEAOIL.

10. Lahat ng empleyado ng SEAOIL Philippines, Inc., mga sister companies nito, Masterminds Asia Comm., Inc., mga suppliers ng SEAOIL, mga dealers / franchisees at kanilang mga kamag-anak hanggang sa second degree of consanguinity o affinity ay hindi maaaring lumahok sa raffle promo ng ito.

*Dalawang (2) winners para sa 2nd Prize (1 Tricycle each), Apat (4) na winners para sa 3rd Prize (1 Appliance Showcase each) at Limampu't anim (56) na winners para sa Consolation Prize (Isang (1) Nokia 2100 or Isang (1) 3D Stand Fan each).

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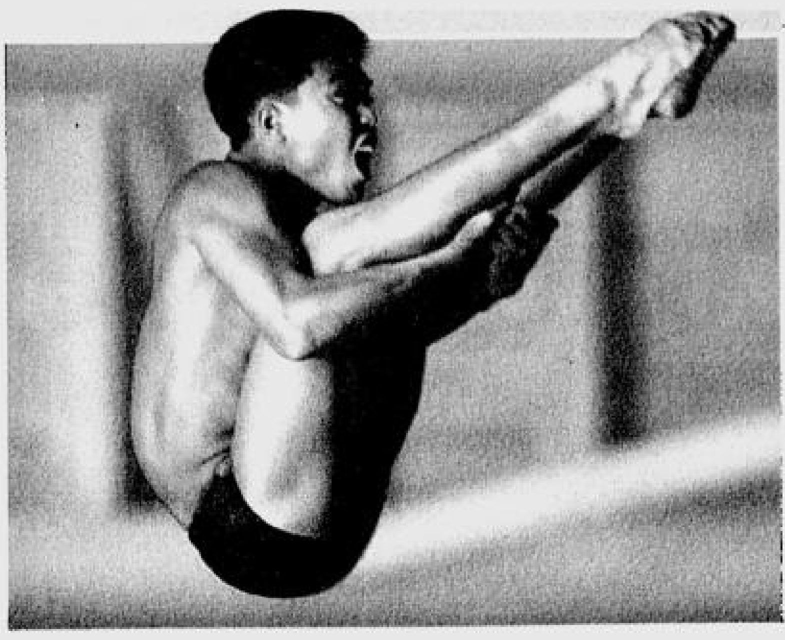


RYAN Rexel Fabriga of the Philippines makes his dive during the final round of the men's 10-m platform diving competition at the 22nd SEA Games in Hanoi, Vietnam, Sunday. Fabriga won the gold with a total of 598.65 points. AP

Vietnam way ahead; fight

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Host Vietnam's explosive march to the overall lead has reduced the 22nd Southeast Asian Games into a five-nation scramble for second place this early.

With 25 golds after the first day of full-scale action, Vietnam seemed well on the way to becoming only the fourth nation to rule the biennial sportsfest after Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Vietnam, a nation of lean, trim people moving on motorbikes and bicycles, is looking to win 117 of the 442 golds staked in 32 events.

And with the way they registered victories on all fronts Saturday, the Vietnamese will surely be adding more to their golden stockpile.

So outclassed was the opposition thus far that Malaysia, overall champion when it hosted the SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur in 2001, and surprising Singapore found themselves leading the fight for second place with seven golds each.

The Malaysians are ranked second only because they have one more silver than their neighbors, who have eight.

Thailand and Indonesia managed to come up with five golds each, w

Thais getting rated above the Ind

winning more silvers, 15-4.

The Philippines, bidding to impr

its fifth place finish two years ag

sixth with four golds.

With Vietnam all but conceded t

jority of the medals, the fight for r

up honors will be decided by one

aspect: which country can expl

strong points.

And because the golds have bee

to come by for the rest of the fie

Philippines' target of over 40 gold

just propel it to the top three list.

Arcilla, Arevalo advance

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Filipinos Johnny Arcilla and Czarina Mae Arevalo took the easy route to the second round of the tennis singles in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here Sunday.

Arcilla downed Myanmar's Min Min, 6-2, 6-2, in men's play while Arevalo trounced another Myanmar bet, Chit Su Yee, 6-0, 6-1, at the Lan Anh Club.

Both will face tougher opponents in the second round.

The 23-year-old Arcilla is slated to meet the winner between second seed Febi Widhiyanto of Indonesia and Vongsavath Chansomphc of Thailand.

Widhiyanto, ranked No. 501 in the world, bested Arcilla, a native of Southern Leyte, in the quarterfinal of the team event, 6-2, 6-3, 6-3, Friday.

The 17-year-old Arevalo, on the other hand, will meet Indonesia's Sandy Gumulya.

Arevalo, who hails from Batac, Ilocos Sur, subdued Gumulya, 7-6 (5), 4-6, 7-6 (7), in the team event semifinals won by Indonesia, 2-1.

"I just told my players to do their best out there.

Arcilla and Arevalo will be up against tough opponents," said national coach Johnny Jose.

Heartbreaks in the pool: No one's to blame

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—We're not blaming anybody. These things happen.

The Filipino swimmers needed these kind words from Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit as they tried to recover from the haunting loss of a gold medal in the men's 4 x 200 freestyle relay finals Saturday night.

It would have been the country's first swim gold since the 1997 Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta.

The RP gallery led by Dayrit had erupted in joy after the team of Mark Kalaw, Carlo Piccio, Miguel Mendoza and Miguel Molina came from behind to finish first over the Malaysian quartet.

But gloom quickly took over when the Filipinos were disqualified for an infraction charged on Mendoza.

The violation was "jumping too soon," which many doubted because the 21-year-old University of Georgia student is a long-time member of the freestyle relay team.

"I didn't do anything wrong," moaned Mendoza as he was consoled by the same teammates in the RP squad that pulled off a bronze finish in the 800-meter relay in Malaysia two years ago.

While the Philippines gamely accepted the loss, it was a bitter pill to take considering that minutes earlier, Molina had come to within a touch of the men's 400 individual medley gold.

Squeezing the juice in the final 25 meters the way he did later in the anchor leg of the relay, Molina matched stroke

Thailand's veteran Ratapong Siris

whose longer reach proved the key

touched first to beat the Filipino by 0

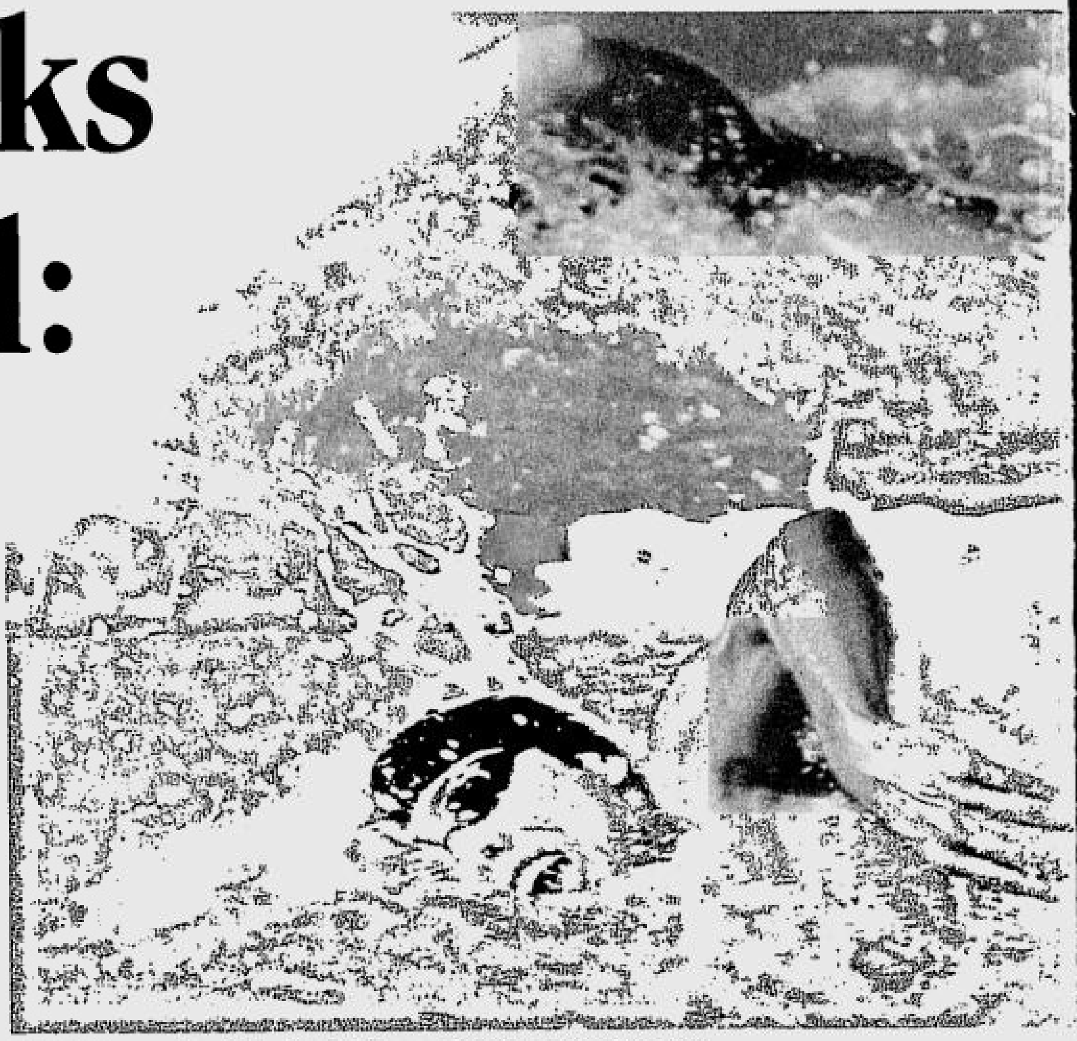
second.

The Thai won in 4:23.20 to M

4:23.26. Both swimmers sank the

record of 4:25.16.

Another heartbreaker was Lizza D



MOLINA competes in the final of the men's 400 individual medley.

Cagers bare ultimate target: 2008 Olympics

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH CITY—RP-Cebuana Lhuillier team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier is looking beyond the 22nd Southeast Asian Games. He has his sights trained on the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"Ours (Cebuana Lhuillier) is a long-term commitment. We really want to help the Philippine team return to the Olympics," said Lhuillier, who's been here with assistant team manager Danny Francisco since Monday to see to it that everything is well with the Filipino cagers who are defending their SEAG crown.

"As long as we are needed, we'll be around," said Lhuillier.

"I'm doing this for the love of basketball," said Lhuillier, owner of the Cebu Gems in the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association. "My family has always been involved with sports," citing the popular Lhuillier team they maintained in the '80s.

Noting that there's a need to keep the nucleus of the Philippine team, Lhuillier said they have enlisted the services of Gary David, Recaredo Calimag, Richard Melencio and Dennis Madrid up to 2005, when the SEAG goes to Manila.

Lhuillier, married to Bea Lucero who's a SEAG gold medalist in both gymnastics and taekwondo, has also enlisted the services of RP team assistant coaches Boyzie Zamar and Dong Vergeire to go to the provinces in search of young and tall players who can be developed for the national team.

As proof of his deep commitment, Lhuillier said he has put up a gym in Las Piñas which could serve as the Nationals' homecourt.

Lhuillier has also given Francisco, who was once a top cager until a heart ailment cut short his career, the go-signal to help the the RP ladies team.

PADILLA: In the hunt for gold KARL SUMBELING

RP five's su shape in 'w

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH CITY—The key to success of the Philippine men's basketball team takes shape in an unpretentious room at Thien Hong Hotel here.

It's called the war room.

The country's tri-colors is prominently displayed, there's a big poster with the team members' signatures scribbled on it, and words of wisdom and encouragement are plastered all over the walls.

It's where the coaching staff, composed of Aric del Rosario, Boyzie Zamar and Dong Vergeire, team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier and his assistant Danny Francisco, maps out strategies for RP-Cebuana Lhuillier.

40-60 golds can still be achieved—Bub

HO CHI MINH CITY—On target.

That's the assessment of Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain on the performance of Filipino athletes in the 22nd Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

"We're really on track. We've set a standard of 40-60 golds and I really believe that it can be achieved," said Buhain on Sunday, two days after the SEAG officially began.

"I'm confident that if all their (national sports associations) forecast are met and their dreams would come true, then 40 golds are really achievable," he said. "Thus far, it's give and take. There are expected triumphs that didn't materialize, but there are also unpexpected victories. That means the Philippine bench is deep and we're right to send this delegation."

Buhain and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo flew into this bustling city from Hanoi Saturday to monitor Filipino athletes competing in nine events here.

Sounding optimistic, Buhain said that if things turn out well, the original target (40) can be reached

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TV firm committed to airing SEAG action

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JEMAH Television, the firm that's covering the 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam, remains committed to bringing the action to Philippine TV screens despite the "extremely prohibitive coverage cost."

Network project director Freddie R. Infante made this assurance in the wake of complaints from sports fans about the absence of live TV coverage of the Games' opening ceremonies—highlight of major competitions of such magnitude—Friday night.

"Sports fans may not be aware of the logistical aspects involved in 'live' coverages of international sporting events," said Infante. "Coverage costs are extremely prohibitive that even local TV networks find difficulty in sacrificing financial and manpower resources without the full support from the business sector."

Still, Infante said Jemah TV "wholeheartedly committed itself to bring the SEA Games on two networks, NBN 4 and ABC 5, in the spirit of nationalism."

SEAG telecasts start at 5 p.m. daily on NBN and 6:30 p.m. on ABC on weekdays. NBN starts showing the highlights at 3 p.m., and ABC at 4 p.m. during weekends.

Fairness

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala should heed the call to treat kindly the appeal of repentant Red Bull player Jimwel Torion to lower his eight-month suspension for committing a hard foul that fractured the nose of Talk 'N Text's Jimmy Alapag because playing basketball is his only bread and butter.

Besides, the record will show that the eight-month ban and heavy P70,000 fine imposed on Torion—the longest and biggest ever in the 28-year history of the pro league—were too harsh compared with the penalties meted out on erring players in the past. For example, during Game 2 of the San Miguel Beer-Coca-Cola Reinforced Conference title series last Dec. 3. SMB's Danny Ildefonso was slapped a one-game suspension and fined P30,000 for intentionally hitting with a closed fist Coke import Tee McClary after the latter elbowed him during a deadball situation in the third quarter. McClary was also suspended for one game, but slapped a lesser fine of P15,000.

In the case of Torion, the Red Bull point guard did not intentionally attack Alapag with a closed fist during their do-or-die game last Nov. 19, which the Phone Pals won, 95-81. It was more of an unfortunate accident that Torion hit the nose of Alapag after he tried very hard to stop the peppery TNT player from scoring during the closing seconds of that physical game.

"Hindi ko po naman sinasadya ang nangyari (It was an accident)," said Torion, son of a poor fisherman from Argao, Cebu. "I didn't mean to do it. I'm sorry, Jimmy."

Before Torion's eight-month suspension, there was a previous longest suspension period when Rudy "The Destroyer" Distrito of Sunkist was sacked for four months by then PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino for committing a deliberate foul on Alaska's Jeffrey Cariaso in 1995. Bernardino also suspended for three games and fined P40,000—then the highest—Formula Shell's Jay Mendoza for starting a free-for-all after he elbowed Ginebra's Wilmer Ong on the head in the closing minutes of the game, which Shell won, 84-63.

That Eala should punish Torion is understandable, but many say—and I agree—that the PBA commissioner should be fair in treating Torion to show to the people that there is equal treatment and not discrimination in the pro league. "It's grossly unfair to Jimwel (Torion) and the Red Bull management," head coach Yeng Guiao said of the PBA penalties. "As the league commissioner, Noli Eala's duty is to dispense justice and fairness to all."

Torion had offered no excuses for his misconduct and apologized to Alapag, the fans and his team. The sole breadwinner in a family of five, the youngest barely two weeks old, Torion is also sending to school his youngest sister, V

ond-year nursing student a

College. As a result of the

sion, he was forced to retu

new Honda CRV and reco

of his P250,000 down pay

also stands to lose his mon

P275,000, totaling at least

during the eight-month sus

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from February to September

A multitalented point g

year-old, 5-foot-9 Torion is

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Torion in the league, the fa

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Going into the Games, Thailand had predicted a golden harvest of 120. Indonesia had set a target of 70 and Malaysia 50.

Singapore showed early strength mainly due to its acknowledged supremacy in swimming, where it won twice Saturday through veteran Jocelyn Yeo, and in bodybuilding, where it topped three of eight weight categories.

Concentrating on combat sports following the Vietnam War experience, the hosts started to reap the fruits of their specialized training by bagging most of their 25 golds in shooting (5), karate (6) and judo (3).

EDWIN BACASMAS

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silver in the women's 200 backstroke as the Thai she beat in topping the heats in the morning, Chonlathorn Vorathamrong, showed her true worth in the finals to finish pulling away.

The Filipinos went on to finish the day with two bronze medals through Piccio in the 400 IM and the women's team in the 4 x 200 freestyle relay.

ccess takes ar room'

It's where they view tapes of games of the other countries entered in the tournament. It's where the physical therapists soothe the hurting limbs. It's where they discuss all matters regarding the team, including the players' mental and physical preparedness.

And, it's where the players' attitude took a dramatic turn on Wednesday. Noticing that the players were lackluster during practice, Vergeire called all the players inside and handed each one his passport and ticket.

"I told them that whoever is not ready to play for flag and country can go out and leave," said Vergeire.

Some stayed, others left only to return later.

"We knew by then that they're ready to go to war," said Vergeire.

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said Buhain. Roy Luarca

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behind in the medal standings, I'm still saluting our athletes for their fierce determination to win despite the haphazard preparations. On the other hand, I'm blaming those narrow-minded officials for always giving us false illusions, for lacking clear-cut programs and directions in spite of the millions we spend for international and regional meets such as the Olympics, Asian and SEA Games.

It's a pity that no matter what we do everything will only be useless. We sorely lack the strong discipline of our Southeast Asian neighbors like Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and, believe it or not, Vietnam, which has lorded it over in this year's SEAG medal race.

There is a pattern of declining performances by the Philippines in the SEA Games. In 1991 in Manila, the Philippines finished a strong second behind perennial overall champion Indonesia. The country then landed third in Singapore in 1993 and in Thailand in 1995, dropping to fourth in Indonesia in 1997 and placing a poor fifth in Brunei in 1999 and in Malaysia in 2001.

Quisay, Yambao Adidas king and queen of road

TOP favorites Alley Quisay and Liza Yambao proved they were a cut above the rest when they ruled yesterday's 5th Adidas King of the Road at the Global City in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Between the two victories, however, Yambao's was more decisive.

The 23-year-old Quisay engaged Cresenciano Sabal in an exciting sprint finish before crossing the endline first in front of the Adidas Sports Kamp at The Fort.

Quisay tagged along with the 24-year-old Sabal throughout the 10-kilometer foot race before finally exploding out front in the last 50 meters to edge Sabal by a mere second.

A member of the RP team based in Baguio City, Quisay won with a time of 30 minutes, 11 seconds.

"*Nagpalitan lang kami ng trangko at nakauna lang siya pagpasok dito sa tulay* (Kalayaan flyover). *Pero noong nakita kong ubos na rin siya, binanatan ko na dito sa may* finish line (We alternately set the pace before he pulled in front entering the bridge. But when I saw him fade due to exhaustion, I gave it all)," said Quisay, who also ruled the 10-k side event of the 2003 Milo Marathon finals in Manila last Oct. 19.

Apart from pocketing the P10,000 winner's purse and a P10,000 gift certificate, Quisay earned the right to represent the Philippines to the Asian Adidas King of the Road in Bangkok, Thailand, on Dec. 21, along with women's champion Yambao.

The multititled Yambao found little resistance from her peers in the event held in partnership with Viva, Globe Gentxt, PowerAid and Snickers.

She timed 37 minutes, 36 seconds, well ahead of runner-up Marychiel Minas (38:34) and third placer Sealand Agana (41:30).

More than 1,500 runners answered the opening gun fired by Adidas Sports marketing manager Goody Custodio.

The winners in the age-group categories were Michael Oquendo (40:34) and Cinderella Agana (44:41) in the 9-12 years old category; Nathaniel Villarta (33:28) and Sealand Agana (41:30) in the 13-19; Cresenciano Sabal (30:12) and Marychiel Minas (38:34) in the 20-29; Modesto Madalang Jr. (32:17) and Belen Evangelista (51:06) in the 30-39; and Amado Gerpacio (35:08) and Rosario Alberto (49:03) in the 40-49 age group.

QUISAY and Yambao pose with organizers and guests at the awards rite of the Adidas race. From left, Goody Custodio, Adidas sports marketing manager, Chooey Velayo of Globe Gentext, Bing Paredes, Adidas sales director and race organizer Rudy Biscocho.

Surigao booters advance to Mindanao Coke finals

BUTUAN CITY—Surigao Norte National High School trimmed Agusan National High, 3-1, and Agusan del Sur champion Patin-ay National High, 5-0, recently to rule the all-Caraga regional Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football tournament and clinch the last spot in the all-Mindanao championship.

Surigao Norte High earned another trip to the finals set Dec. 17-20.

The Surigaonons will join Compostela Valley titlist Maco National High, Zamboanga del Norte's Andres Bonifacio College of Dipolog City, all-North Mindanao winner Holy Cross of Bukidnon, all-Cotabato champion San Lorenzo Ruiz Academy and host Emar Learning Center.

Eagle Ridge golfers reclaim Sta. Lucia Cup

GIANT Eagle Ridge outdueled Alta Vista of Cebu to recapture the overall championship in the closest finish ever in the Sta Lucia Tour.

Eagle Ridge completed a swashbuckling comeback from a 12-point deficit by ruling the last two legs it co-hosted with Orchard last Friday and Saturday.

The Eagle Ridge bets' show of force saw them post a couple of 40-point performances in both legs played at the Norman course and the Palmer layout of Orchard.

They finished the three-month, 108-round series with 137 points, 19 ahead of erstwhile defending champion Alta Vista.

After taking the lead in the first two legs in Davao and Cebu, Alta Vista's charge went astray in the Luzon leg as the Cebuanos settled for runner-up honors with 118 points.

Rancho Palos Verdes of Davao wound up third with 102, with Orchard placing fourth with 85 and Royale Tagaytay checking in fifth with 74.

The fourth season of the Sta. Lucia Tour, a unique course-hopping series for golf clubs flying the banner of the giant real estate firm, was sponsored by Unirock, Petron, Readycon, Gainers Marketing, Kubota, Kodak, Samsung, Titleist, Footjoy, Yamaha, Omega and Pagcor with Marco Polo (Davao), Marriot (Cebu) and Dusit Hotel Nikko (Manila) as partner hotels and Cebu Pacific as the official carrier.

The team titles for the series were won by Eagle Ridge 1 (Shinichi Ogihara, Hector Miole, Jose Nepomuceno and Benjamin del Rosario) in Group I, Royale Tagaytay 2 (Avelino Sta. Maria, Oscar Ordinario, Dennis Raymund Rodriguez and Nelson Chua) in Group II and Palos Verdes 5 (Vander Slois Jaap, Nick Montero, Bresnev Haq and Flory Pareja) in Group III.

The individual winners were Emir Abutazil of Alta Vista (Class A), Lee Moon Ho of Eagle Ridge (Class B), George Aznar of Alta Vista (Class C) and Jun Canedo of Palos Verdes (Class D).

Vicente Santos and Wini Gob, co-chair of the executive committee, both expressed satisfaction with the way the series was disputed this season.

"It's certainly one of the closest we've seen and this is proof of the quality of competition," said Gob and Santos.

Eagle Ridge, which won the first two editions of the meet, wiped out a big deficit by outscoring Alta Vista, 40-27, on its turn to host the series.

When the battle shifted to Orchard, Eagle Ridge came out with guns firing and ended up with an even more imposing lead, 40-22.

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TRIBUTE AT SANTA ANA

Material Maker wins Wind Blown race

HERMIE Esguerra (second from right) holds Wind Blown at the winner's circle. Also shown, from left, are jockey Jeff Zarate, trainer Nestor Manalang, breeder Sandy Javier and jockey Miguel Recosana. ROGER MARGALLO

By Edwin Villanueva

MATERIAL Maker won the inaugural race honoring Wind Blown who was feted in grand style yesterday at the Santa Ana Park.

Proving his recent win was for real, Material Maker repeated over Free Wind in ruling the day's main event, the Wind Blown Classic, from flagpole to finish.

Earlier, Wind Blown, the acknowledged "King of Philippine Racing," was honored in a short but colorful send-off ceremony.

The horse, whom prominent sportsman Hermie Esguerra calls his "pride and joy," galloped twice around the track under Jeffril Zarate's guidance as the overflow crowd cheered in unison.

"*Kung makakapagsalita lang si* Wind Blown, I'm sure *magpapasalamat po siya nang taos puso sa inyong lahat.* (If only Wind Blown could talk, I'm sure he'll also thank you from the bottom of his heart). Mission accomplished. I hope he'll be as successful as a stallion," said Esguerra.

For the first time, the multitude who packed the Makati racetrack heard pop singer Rannie Raymundo's stirring rendition of the song "Wind Blown" depicting the horse's awesome power and strong crowd appeal.

People close to the progeny of Hazm and Wind in My Hair also graced the occasion to salute the galloper.

Sandy Javier, describing Wind Blown as the greatest horse he has ever bred, was among those who met the galloper at the winner's circle after the farewell gallop. He was joined by special guest Rep. Imee Marcos, Marho chief Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, trainer Nestor Manalang and the other jockeys who rode Wind Blown—DH Borbe Jr., ES Aguila, MS Recosana, FM Raquel Jr., PR Dilema and JB Cordero.

"Proud *po ako na masakyan si* Wind Blown. *Siya na yata ang pinakamagaling* (I'm proud to have ridden Wind Blown. He's the best)," said Zarate, whom Esguerra lauded as the "jockey of the year."

By ruling the Wind Blown Classic, Material Maker stamped herself as the horse to beat in the Presidential Gold Cup on Dec. 14.

The four-year-old bay filly by Strong Material out of Rhummaker finished the 1,800-meter contest two lengths ahead of Free Wind, while Success Story and High Octane wound up third and fourth, respectively. Material Maker had previously beaten Free Wind in the Japan Racing Association Cup.

Owned by the Dos Ranchos Jofero, the Pat Dilema-ridden Material Maker pocketed P600,000. Winning time was 1:58.8.

Upset also rocked the racefest as Siete de Marso, named after the birthday of Esguerra and the colt itself, outkicked top choice War Hero to score a two-length triumph in the Wind Blown Mile Colts-Fillies.

In the other featured events, Empire King topped the Wind Blown Juvenile Colts, Cover Girl prevailed in the Wind Blown Juvenile Fillies, while Hazmoore remained as the fleetest galloper in the land by capturing the Philracom Grand Championship, also under Dilema.

Strength

Direct hits?

Sure, the Filipino has his share of that.
From calamities to crises,
he has received blows that batter his state.

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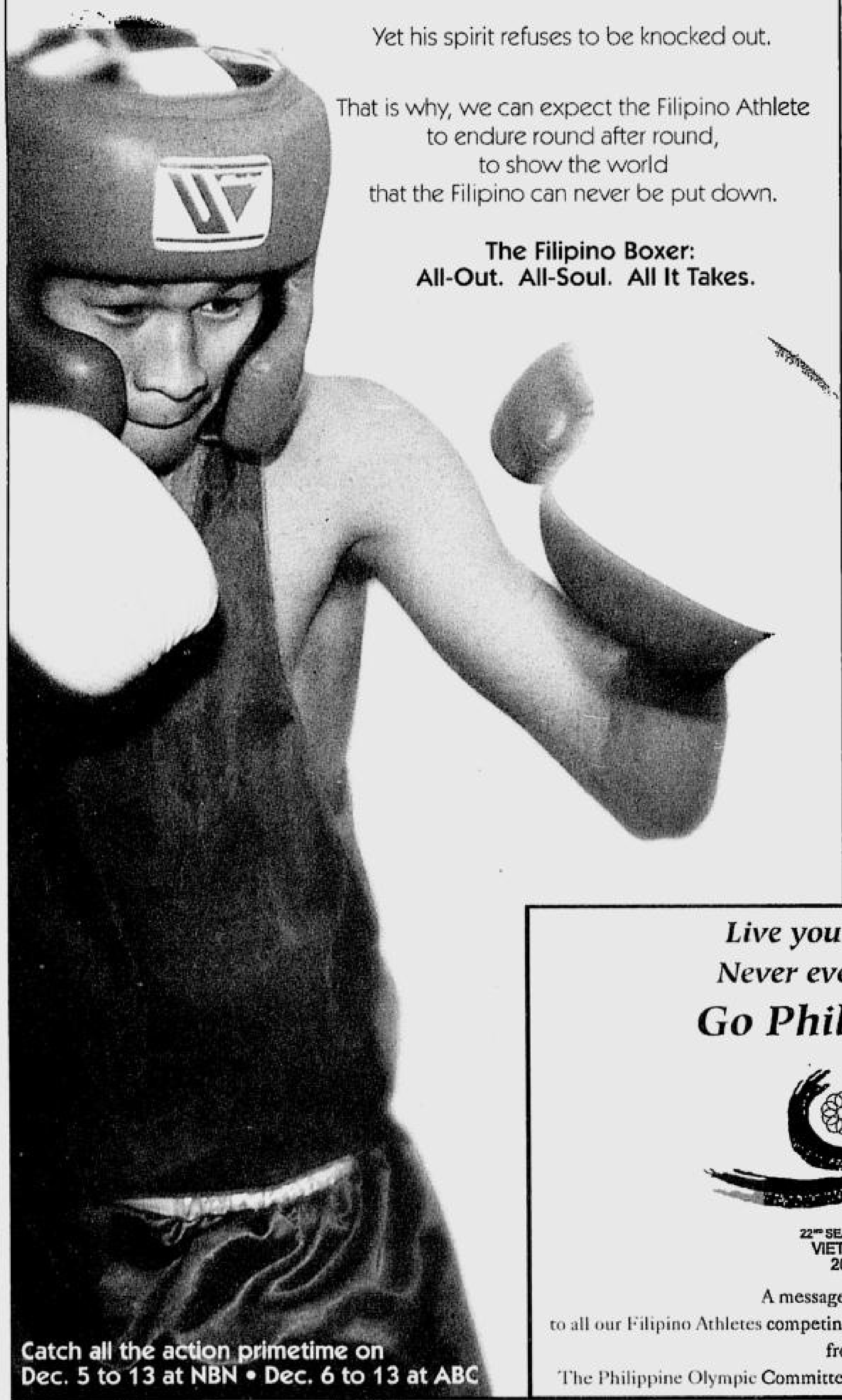

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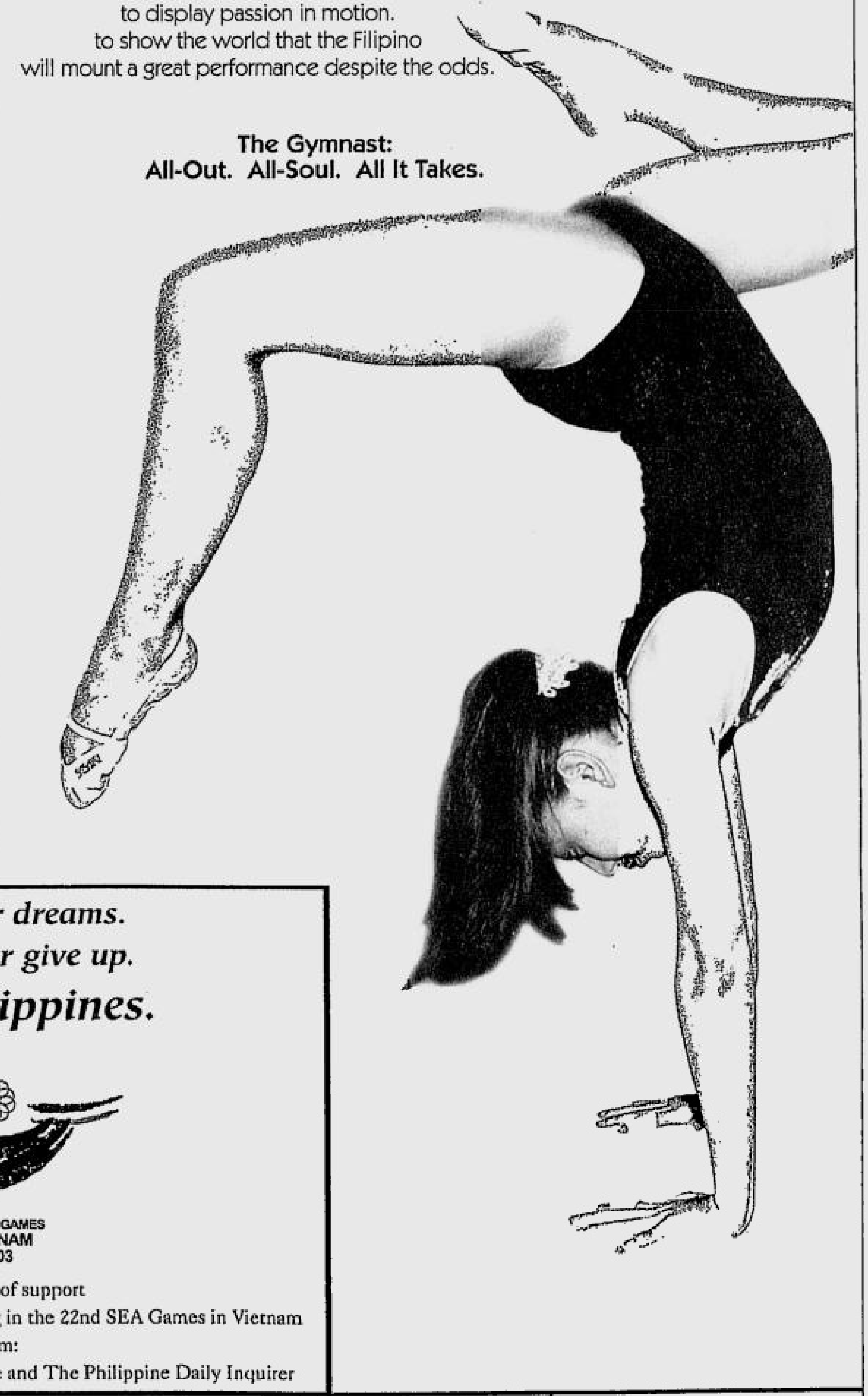

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Furyk rules Grand Slam by 8

POIPU BEACH, Hawaii—Jim Furyk carded a 4-under-par 68 to win the PGA Grand Slam by eight strokes over Mike Weir.

US Open champion Furyk pocketed $400,000 of a $1-million purse Saturday and snapped Tiger Woods' record string of five straight victories in the exclusive 36-hole event for the winners of this year's four majors. Furyk wound up 9 under on the 7,081-yard Poipu Bay course.

Furyk, who won twice this year on the PGA Tour and finished fourth on the money list, was never seriously threatened. He opened Friday with a 67, good for a five-stroke lead over Masters champion Weir.

Weir, the first Canadian to win a major, closed with a 71 to earn $250,000. PGA champion Shaun Micheel shot a 70 to finish 10 strokes back at 145 and collect $200,000. British Open champion Ben Curtis was another shot behind after a final-round 73 and made $150,000.

It was the first event in the Grand Slam's 21-year history featuring all first-time major champions. But it was nine-year tour veteran Furyk who showed his experience.

He held off his opponents with strong iron play, maintained his five-stroke advantage at the turn and birdied Nos. 10, 12 and 14 to pull away.

Furyk hit a 5-iron approach shot from 158 yards to set up a 6-foot birdie putt on the 435-yard 12th hole. The birdie, coupled with Weir's bogey, gave Furyk a commanding eight-stroke lead.

He went up by another stroke on par-4 14th when he hit a wedge within 6 feet of the cup. *AP*

ORLANDO'S Tracy McGrady (left) and forward Juwan Howard look forlorn on the bench. AP

Mavs hand Magic 19th loss in a row

DALLAS—Make it 19 losses in a row for the Orlando Magic, who are closing in on the NBA record for consecutive defeats.

Antoine Walker had 24 points and 16 rebounds and Michael Finley added 22 points to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 110-97 win Saturday night.

With Dallas playing its fifth game in eight days, all without injured Dirk Nowitzki, coach Don Nelson took advantage of the woeful Magic by mixing players in and out of the lineup. The chemistry may not have always been right, but the Mavericks didn't need much.

The single-season NBA record for consecutive losses is 23 by the Vancouver Grizzlies in 1995-96 and the Denver Nuggets in 1997-98. The overall record is 24 by the Cleveland Cavaliers at the end of 1981-82 and the start of the following season. Orlando's next four games are against Phoenix, Washington, New Jersey and Atlanta.

In Miami, Tim Duncan beat the halftime buzzer with his second 3-pointer of the season, finishing with 21 points and 19 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs drubbed the Miami Heat, 86-70.

Coming off an 11-point victory in Orlando on Friday night that snapped a four-game losing streak, the Spurs got a season-high 21 points and 13 rebounds from Rasho Nesterovic and 11 assists from Tony Parker.

San Antonio hadn't beaten the Magic and Heat on the same trip since January 1998.

In East Rutherford, Kenyon Martin scored 21 points and pulled down 12 rebounds, helping New Jersey beat Phoenix. *AP*

Complete results:

New Jersey 99, Phoenix 88; Cleveland 95, Atlanta 85; San Antonio 86, Miami 70; New Orleans, 97 Chicago 91; Dallas 110, Orlando 97; Houston 86, Detroit 80; Washington 114, Milwaukee 109; Golden State 104, New York 92.

Senior Care tilt at Southwoods tees off Wednesday

A FIELD of 144 players from various clubs all over the country will vie for honors in the Senior Care Fellowship Golf Classic slated on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods.

Registration for the tourney ends today. Interested parties may call the Federation office at 840-3951 or 830-2222.

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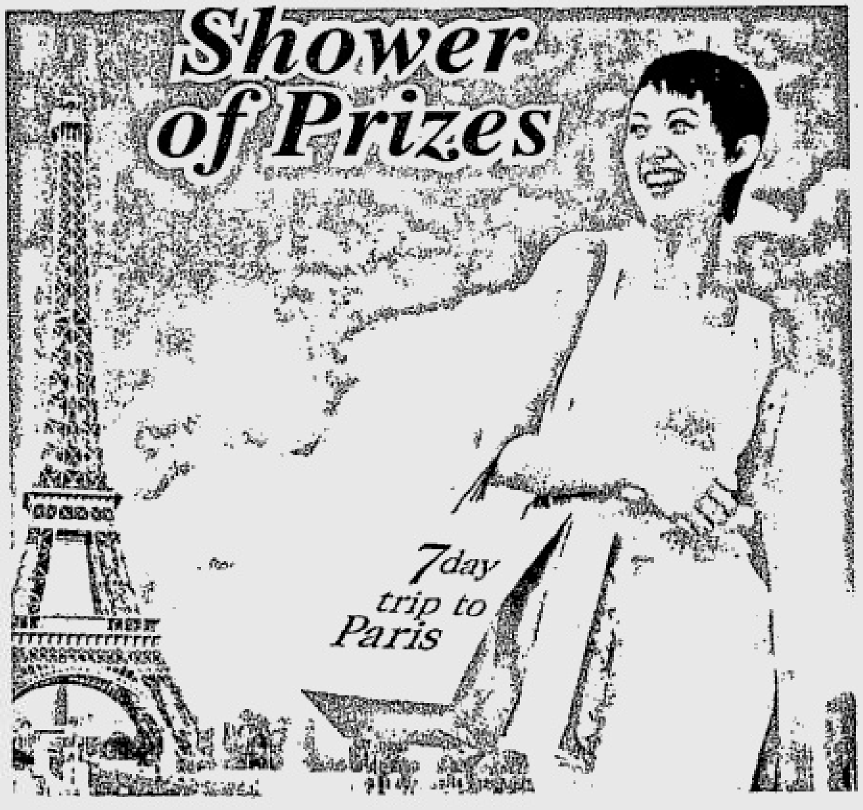

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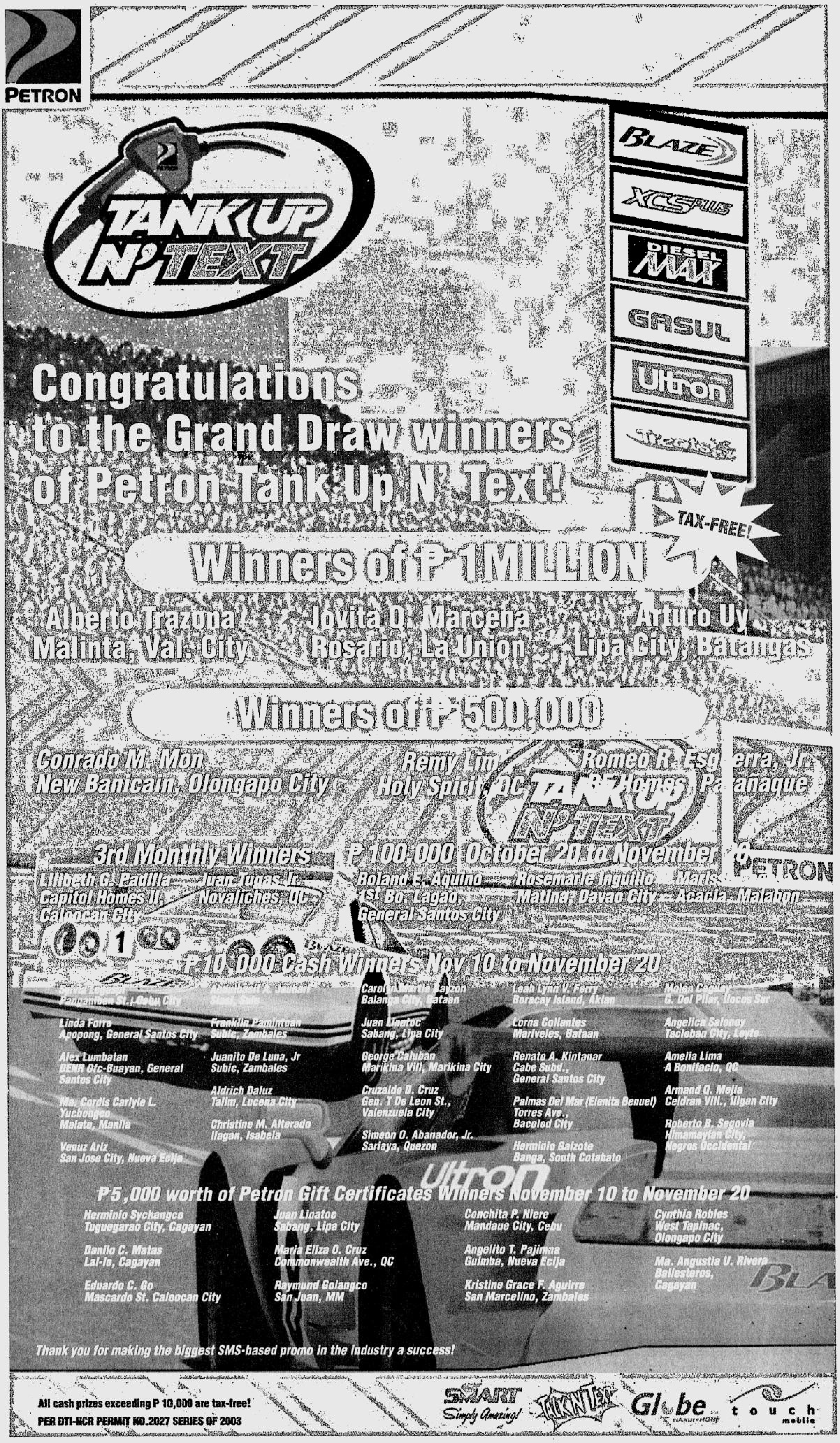

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BSP expects weak peso, high interest rates in '04

WHAT'S INSIDE
- Cocktales /B7
- No Free Lunch /B4

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has come up with a more conservative set of economic numbers for 2004 reflecting modest growth expectations, a weaker peso and higher interest rates.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the "very preliminary numbers" the central bank had drafted considered factors like the prevailing political uncertainties, relatively high oil prices, and a possible wage increase next year.

The economic targets will be presented to the International Monetary Fund and eventually to the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee.

"We are still firming up the numbers for next year. They could still change but the general outlook has been factored in," said Buenaventura, stressing that the estimates were computed using a 10-percent estimated growth in exports and 11 percent in imports in 2004.

An IMF team is conducting a review of the Philippine economy to determine whether it could sustain the growth, price stability and fiscal discipline achieved this year.

The BSP is looking at a lower growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2004 against the DBCC forecast of 4.9-5.8 percent. GDP growth this year should hit at least 4.2 percent.

BSP/B5

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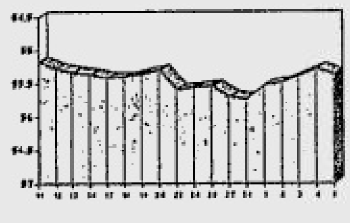
GRAPHS BY JOEL PARADEZA

NOVEMBER DECEMBER

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STOCK MARKET

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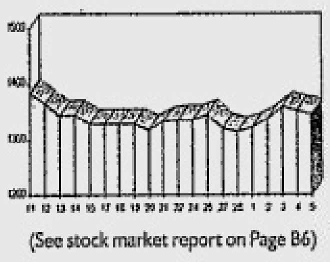

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Stocks seen to weaken

LOCAL stocks are seen to slacken up a bit this week after a positive close in the first week of December due to the lack of fresh incentives to sustain bargain-hunting.

Traders said that while December was seasonally a strong month for equities, further rallies in the local stock market might be capped by political uncertainties that have overshadowed favorable economic developments.

The main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index closed at 1,345.27 on bargain-hunting last Friday, rising by 2.39 percent from a week ago on the back of strong gains in Wall Street.

"Chartwise, Friday's close at 1345.27 continues to highlight that a near-term correction in prices is in progress," said Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas.

"The recent rally experienced by the market is nothing but a technical rebound and is expected to terminate within the 1,350-1,380 level, after which a resumption in the correction is to be expected, more or less toward the 1,270-1,300," he said.

Ravelas said only a break above the 1,400 would suggest a reversal of trend.

The market bounce last week was attributed to bargain-hunting.

Doris C. Dumlao

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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IF YOU shut out, just for a moment, all the ridiculous noise from the handlers of those champions called "presidential candidates," you can actually hear the clock ticking.

It is the ticking clock of the powerful time bomb called our dangerous national debt. It is set to blow off in 2006, or just three years from now.

That is based on the projection of the IMF, the International Monetary Fund, the international body keeping an eye on time bombs like the Philippine national debt.

Our national debt is explosive, because it keeps on growing every year, which, in turn, has something to do with the budget deficit.

We incur a huge deficit every year, because the government likes to live beyond its means. It keeps on spending money it does not have.

And like everybody else, such as our neighborhood playboy, the government borrows tons of money to maintain its high flying lifestyle.

Now, according to a study by the IMF, if we do not do something about the deficit this year, our downfall will become irreversible by 2006. In short, BOOM!

***

QUIETLY, those champions of the people, a.k.a. "presidential candidates," are not saying anything about the frightening debt bomb.

Leading the race, according to all surveys, is Fernando Poe Jr., a.k.a. FP "Da King" J, who prefers to campaign for the presidency silently.

Neither do the incumbent Gloriaetta nor her former Cabinet member Raul Roco want to say anything about the problem.

As for Sen. Panfilo Lacson, he is still busy fighting with his own partymates, therefore, has no time for trivialities like the national debt.

But please try to understand their reluctance to talk about something which is a matter of life and death for all of us, and I mean ALL, including Jose Pidal (not his real name) and Mr. Suave.

There is only one way to defuse the debt bomb. And that is by imposing new taxes. Nobody ever talks about taxes in a campaign.

***

OH, but they do talk about the possibility of cheating in the coming elections. In fact it was the main concern of the man named Band…Wrist Band.

He wanted to support his best friend FP "Da King" J, instead of his best police general Ping Lacson, because, by his sheer popularity, it would be hard to cheat FP "Da King" J out of the presidency.

Okay, some people are saying that it is possible to cheat in the 2004 elections.

For instance, if you can break the security code in the automated counting machines (ACM) of the Comelec, there, the entire country is yours.

Hmm. Breaking some computer security codes—or, in techie lingo, "decrypting"—is actually possible. They already did it abroad.

But to do such a tedious task with the Comelec ACM, given the most powerful computers available today, will only take more than 15 billion years.

That is actually, by the way, the estimated age of the universe, give or take a couple of billion years.

I don't know if anybody is willing to take a seat that long, while he or she is waiting for hackers to cheat in the elections, so that he or she can become the oldest president ever in world history.

***

IT is now a big issue in the coming elections—the possibility of hi-tech cheating.

The Comelec is using the ACM for the first time. There is fear of the unknown.

The argument goes that, if something can be fooled around with, the Pinoy will fool around with it.

They point at the thing called the … well "Pinoy ingenuity."

For instance, the story goes that all the coin-operated vending machines around the Philippine embassy in Japan, at one time, were said to be filled with 25-centavo coins.

The machines ran on Japanese 100-yen coins. It so happens that the Philippine coins, at that time, were the same size as the 100-yen coin. Somebody fooled around with the vendo. That kind of "ingenuity."

We also have some genius who can "fake" liquor products with famous international brands, such as the Spanish brandy "Fundador." And the "paltik" industry is still thriving.

As for computer "ingenuity," who else could have created the "love bug," the virus which invaded the Internet worldwide some years ago, but a Pinoy.

So they say that the same thing can happen with the Comelec ACMs.

***

YOU see, it has something to do with this thing which techies call "brute force." In fact, a Frenchman already used it to break some computer security codes.

To us normal guys, "brute force" can mean "rape," or what MMDA head Bayani Fernando does when he messes around with the traffic system.

In the computer lingo, anyway, "brute force" means that you try every key possible in order to open up an encryption, i.e. computer security code.

That Frenchman broke a 40-bit encryption, which (for the sake of some senators) is known by the symbol 2^40 in computer science.

The symbol means that the Frenchman tried different keys these many times—the number 2 multiplied by itself, with the result multiplied by the number 2 again, and so on, up to 40 times.

The French researcher used a network of fast workstations to crack a 40-bit encrypted message. He did it in a little over a week.

Enough time for cheating in the elections, given that "Pinoy ingenuity," right?

***

WRONG—because no matter how brute the force, trying all of the keys until you find the jackpot, it can only work with the Comelec ACM in 15 billion years.

Critics of the ACM are saying that com-

BREAKTIME/ B9

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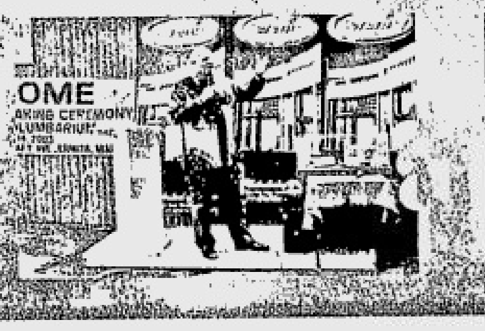

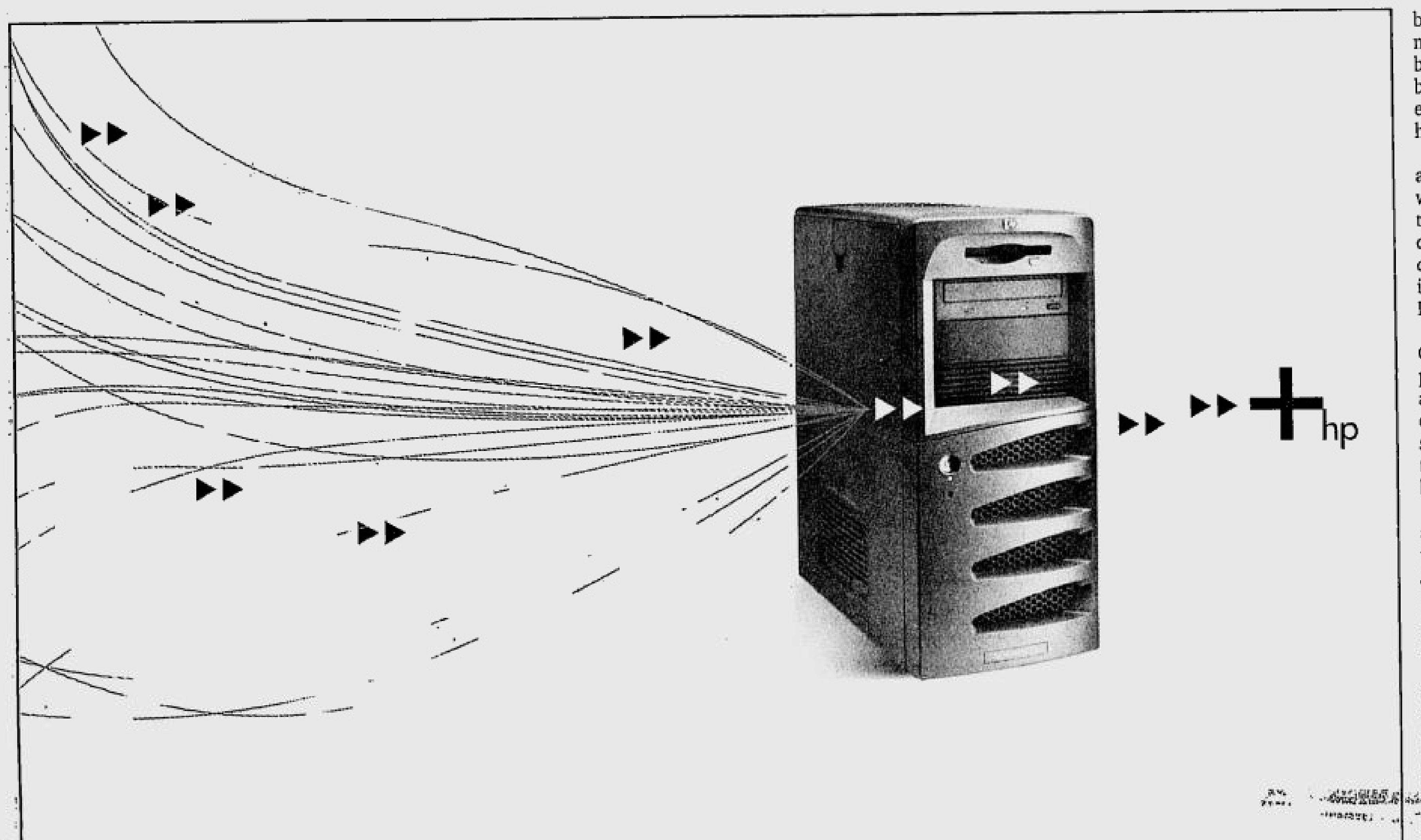

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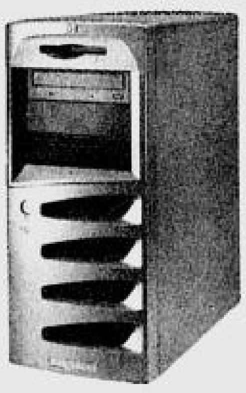

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3295, Series of 2003.

JG Summit, Napocor get BSP nod on foreign borrowings

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE POLICY-MAKING Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved about $100 million in loans for Gokongwei-owned JG Summit Holdings Inc. and the cash-strapped National Power Corp.

The BSP gave its go-ahead to a $60-million, eight-year loan from Bayerische Hypo-Und Vereinsbank AG and Succursule de Paris backed by a guarantee from multilateral group Coface. Monetary authorities also approved in principle a $40-million, 20-year loan of Napocor from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The JG Summit loan will actually be used by its affiliate, Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc.

The proceeds of the loan will finance part of the $65-million supply contract of Digitel with French firm Alcatel.

The $40-million long-term loan of Napocor with JBIC will finance a $100-million project involving the establishment of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

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Barking up the wrong tree

No Free Lunch

Cielito Habito

PEOPLE who keep saying that trade liberalization has been responsible for our economic difficulties of recent years are barking up the wrong tree. It has become the all-too-easy scapegoat and whipping boy that only diverts people's attention away from major failures on the part of government and some private sector players, which are the real causes of our continuing economic challenges. And yet if one takes an objective look at our experience, it doesn't take much to see that the real solutions to our problems lie not in raising protective trade barriers all over again, as EO 241 has done, and other supposedly forthcoming EOs promise to do. These misguided moves will only hurt more people than it will help.

The problem is that the trade policy debate continues to be clouded by a number of myths and fallacies that have great emotional appeal, but actually don't stand up to the facts. Below are two of the most persistent:

Myth 1: "Unbridled globalization" had exposed our domestic producers, particularly our farmers, to unfair competition that has led to the demise of our agricultural sector.

Our so-called recklessly aggressive trade reforms in the 1990s actually raised effective protection on our agricultural sector, reversing the traditional bias of our trade protection that favored manufacturing. In the mid-1970s, the manufacturing sector enjoyed average effective protection of 44 percent, against agriculture's 9 percent. Major farm commodities actually had negative protection, like milled rice (-49 percent), coconut (-6 percent) and sugar (-12 percent), while some manufacturing sectors enjoyed fantastic protection like cigarettes (18,758 percent), flour (1,148 percent) and electrical appliances (204 percent).

By 1998, the pendulum had swung in favor of agriculture, which then enjoyed effective protection of 25 percent even as that for manufacturing had declined to 20 percent. This was largely due to the fact that we had undertaken "dirty tariffication" with our sensitive agricultural products, converting the previous import quotas into import tariffs far higher than the tariff equivalent of the former quotas. Unbridled globalization? Far from it. The critics call for selective liberalization—and yet this is exactly what we had in the 1990s, when so many exceptions were actually made to the four-tier tariff structure provided by President Aquino's EO 470, and to the tariff phasedown to a uniform 5 percent set in motion by President Ramos.

The emotional language claiming the demise of our agriculture is belied by the fact that the agriculture sector had continued to grow at an annual average rate of 2-3 percent through the years. Livestock, poultry and horticultural products were in fact star performers in the 1990s, including through the Asian crisis. And the past quarter's impressive 4.4-percent growth in the farm sector was responsible for pushing overall output (GDP) growth beyond the government target. Demise? Certainly not. A growing industry cannot be a dying industry.

What has been hurting some of our farm producers, especially the vegetable growers, are smuggled vegetables escaping the rightful duties. Indeed, most of the complaints I hear from domestic producers, whether in agriculture or manufacturing, pertain to unfair competition from smuggling, and not because tariffs are low. The problem is not the tariffs per se; it is that tariffs are altogether being evaded. The enemy, then, is not low tariffs (because they are not even low!). It is the smugglers who, ironically, stand to make more money and are therefore encouraged to smuggle even more, the higher the legal tariff rates are.

On the part of our rice, corn and copra farmers, their difficulties are not coming from low tariffs either. They have always come primarily from age-old monopolistic elements in the farm trading sector that have perennially put the small farmers at the losing end of their product sales transactions. These monopolistic elements are in turn reinforced by the lack of transport infrastructure or credit facilities

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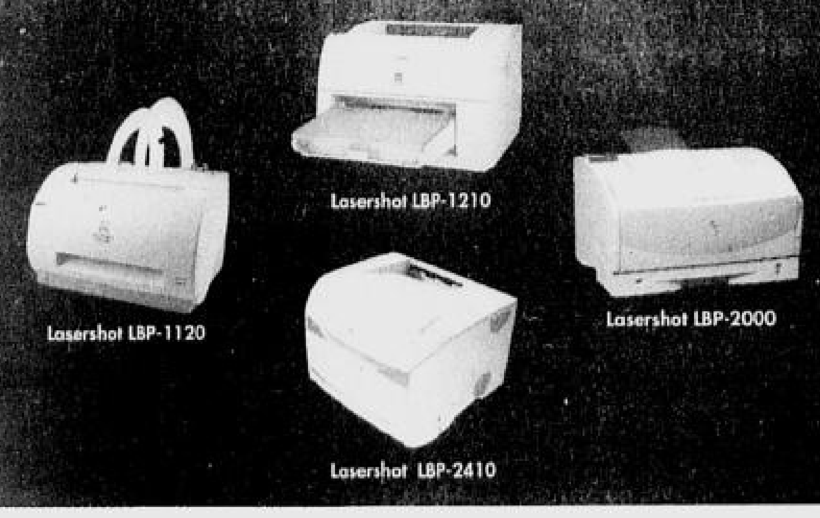

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Strong OFW inflow, weak demand seen boosting peso

By Clarissa S. Batino

AFTER almost a week-long rally for the local currency, the central bank said the peso could gain enough momentum to end the year at the high 54-to-a-dollar level due to weak demand for dollars coupled with strong overseas workers' remittance in the remaining days of 2003.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas hinted that as the peso recovered recently, it had also adjusted its threshold and might be prompted to intervene if the local currency would drop anew to 55.50 to $1.

Earlier, the central bank described 55.70:$1 as the breaking point but that was before the peso plunged to an all-time trading low of 55.85.

Next year, the government is looking to keep the peso stable within the 55-56 to a dollar level. BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the peso should average at 55.50 in 2004 from 54.14 so far this year.

Last week, the peso managed to recover 37 centavos when it closed at 55.36 on Friday against the record low of 55.73 a week ago. Had banks not decided to boost their dollar holdings last Friday, the peso could have sustained its four-day ascent after ending Thursday at 55.275.

"I think there is a possibility that the peso would breach the 55 level and end the year at 54.95," Buenaventura said.

Last Friday's decline, he said, was not worrisome as it indicated only the desire of banks to hedge their position especially toward the weekend.

"Banks were seen short-covering (last Friday) for the weekend. They don't like surprises," Buenaventura noted.

BSP . . .

From page B1

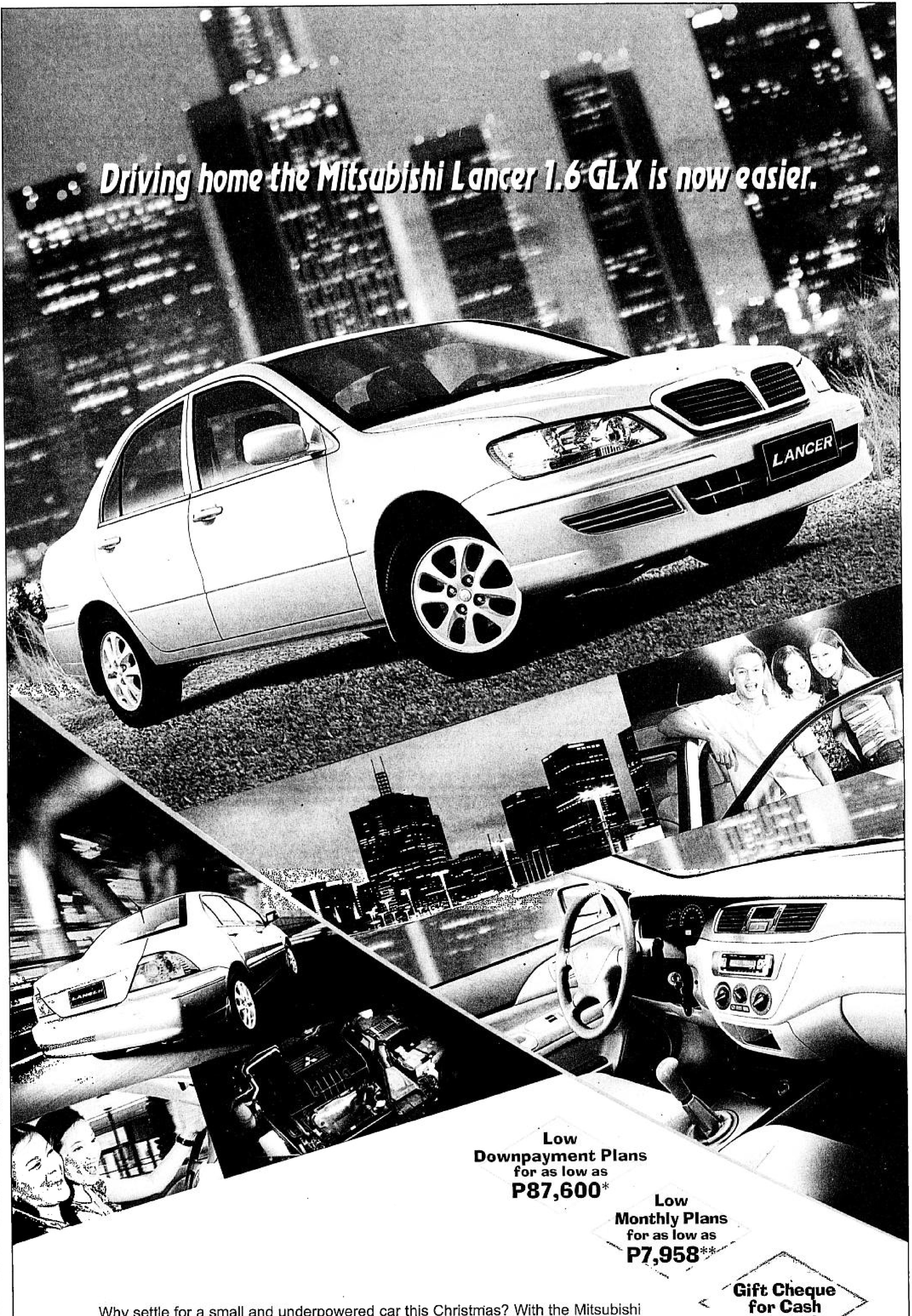
"I think our estimate brought down the lower end of the target because this year we are only expecting a GDP growth of 4.2 percent. Although during an election year, we also expect increased domestic activity," Buenaventura said.

The BSP governor also said the peso could average at 55.50 to $1 next year against the DBCC estimate of 53.50 to 54.50. As of Dec. 5, the peso had averaged at 54.14 to a dollar.

The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate used by banks in pricing their loans could also average between 8 and 9 percent, according to Buenaventura, against the revised DBCC forecast of 7.5 percent. The last auction this year yielded a 91-day treasury bill average of 6.532 percent.

The last time the DBCC firmed up the 2004 targets was in July. The economic team is scheduled to meet early next year to revisit the numbers.

Even with a benign inflation this year, Buenaventura said the BSP kept the inflation target next year unchanged at 4-5 percent given expectations of a wage increase and continued spikes in crude oil prices.



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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

ABC-5 seen luring middle-class audience back to free TV

By Doris C. Dumlao

BUSINESS magnate Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, who recently led a consortium that took over Associated Broadcasting Co. (ABC-5), has vowed to woo the middle class back to free television and give industry duopolists ABS-CBN and GMA Network a "run for their money."

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Cojuangco said a consortium of banks was finalizing a financial package that would be disbursed to reposition ABC-5 as a "strong third" in the broadcasting industry by next year. Initially, he said over a billion pesos would be spent in capital expenditures.

"We've tested the market by our exposure in the last Ad Congress, where we had the opportunity to meet leaders of the advertising industry. We had talked to them and explained our plans and intentions. We told them that we didn't spend a fortune to buy ABC-5 if we're not serious," Cojuangco said.

The dialogs in the Baguio City Ad Congress was fruitful, he said, because it convinced the advertising industry that ABC-5 was now a serious player and competitor in the broadcast industry.

"We are now procuring state-of-the-art equipment for use inside and outside of the studio. We are purchasing new studio cameras, OB vans, and sophisticated studio equipment, the cost of which could reach over a billion pesos. We're spending this for capex because we believe this is our way of enhancing our competitiveness," he explained.

Asked about plans to rationalize ABC-5's existing assets, Cojuangco said that while the consortium had all the assets, some would be disposed off to improve and upgrade facilities.

"We're scouting for a new studio because the one in Novaliches is too far away and is not in the broadcast loop, so to speak. But we haven't found a suitable location yet. We'll probably put it in Makati, or Quezon City. Nothing is final yet," he said.

He also said TV production and marketing veteran Bobby Barreiro was joining ABC-5 as a consultant for marketing and programming and would help in the relaunch of the network in January.

"It's true that ABS-CBN and GMA-7 continue to dominate the free TV. We're fully aware of their continuing dominance even before we bought ABC-5. But we have big plans for ABC-5," Cojuangco said.

He added that ABC-5 would want to be remembered as a broadcast station that introduced reforms and provided a "more intelligent" alternative to the two leading networks, which he said were often criticized for their apparent "condescending attitude" toward the viewing public.

"While we intend to reach out to the vast majority of our people, we don't intend to sacrifice the quality of our programs. Our people have been suffering a lot and they deserve better than the current trash that are now being rammed down their throats," Cojuangco said.

"At the same time, we intend to lure the middle class, who have long migrated to the cable TV out of protest to the current situation in the free TV. We want to tell them that there's hope in the free TV. We want to say that there are good programs in the local channels. Right now, we're in the process of developing our programming and in due time, we'll be announcing them," he explained.

Cojuangco also said he was undeterred by ABC-5's poor ratings at present, saying that starting at the bottom could give a good vantage point.

"For sure, there's no other way but to go up. We're introducing many innovations to put ABC-5 on a competitive level. The coming year is exciting by all means for the broadcast industry. ABC-5 will certainly make a difference in local mass media," he said.

He said the new consortium would hone ABC-5's corporate structure to slug it out in the market and streamline its corporate setup.

Court says receivership best option for Bayantel

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PASIG Regional Trial Court has decided with finality that Lopez-owned Bayan Telecommunications Inc. be placed under receivership until it becomes viable enough to meet its obligations.

In a 12-page decision issued Nov. 28, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, Pasig RTC Branch 158 Judge Jose Hernandez said the company's rehabilitation receiver, former Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex) president Conchita Manabat, would have 120 days from Sept. 22 to evaluate BayanTel's rehabilitation plan and to submit its recommendations to the court.

The trial court maintained that, despite opposition from BayanTel and some of its creditors, placing the company under receivership would be the best way at this point for it to be able to recover enough from its losses and more effectively restructure its debts.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 5, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	4,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	44.5	43.5	44	357,100
Citystate Savings Bank	15	15	15	15	2,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34.5	35	34.5	35	141,300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	350,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	27	26	26	328,000
Philippine National Bank	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	3,300
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	6,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	19,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Abacus Financial	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1755	1755	1755	1755	1,590
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	376,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1375	1375	1355	1365	800
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	8,600
Diversified Fin. Network	2	2	2	2	2,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.68	1,130,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	745	745	735	745	16,970
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.035	0.037	2,100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	12,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.84	0.85	0.84	0.84	2,410,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	800	820	800	805	208,280
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	9,600,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	15.25	14.75	15	162,100
Manila Electric Co. B	23.25	24	23.25	23.75	2,386,300
Petron Corp.	2.18	2.2	2.18	2.18	3,806,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.28	633,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	93,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	450,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.95	1	0.95	1	330,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	16.75	16.5	16.5	71,500
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55.5	54.5	55	24,800
San Miguel Corp. B	62	64	62	63	197,900
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	58,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	300,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.9	4.95	11,970,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.15	145,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	5,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.48	1,240,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	40,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.19	1,850,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	100,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	50,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	19	19.25	18.75	18.75	398,500
Ionics Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	95,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.98	2	1.98	2	12,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1,103,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	940,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	1,170,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	150,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.0875	0.0875	2,100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Chemical Ind. of the Phil	25	25	25	25	1,600,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.8	3	2.65	2.65	34,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	100,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	300,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	30,200
Steniel Manufacturing	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.58	1,100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	430,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26	26	25	25	241,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,500
PLDT 10% Pref Series Cc	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	13,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	820
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.4	4,232,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	810,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	450,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.04	1.04	3,143,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	220,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.3	10,267,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.235	0.23	0.235	1,010,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	2,770,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	23,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	104,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	1,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	4,900,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	6,700,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	1,100,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.0034	0.003	0.0034	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	1,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,700,000

CURRENCIES

December 7, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.827061	1.000000	55.294000
Japan	Yen	0.007644	0.009242	0.511000
United Kingdom	Pound	1.425110	1.723100	95.277100
Hongkong	Dollar	0.106501	0.128770	7.120200
Switzerland	Franc	0.641979	0.776217	42.920100
Canada	Dollar	0.631104	0.763068	42.193100
Singapore	Dollar	0.482392	0.583260	32.250800
Australia	Dollar	0.606750	0.733622	40.564900
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.193914	2.652661	146.676200
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.220550	0.266667	14.745100
Brunei	Dollar	0.480989	0.581564	32.157000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000098	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020734	0.025069	1.386200
UAE	Dirham	0.225204	0.272294	15.056200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.209100	66.856000
Argentina	Peso	0.278941	0.337268	18.648900
Brazil	Real	0.281409	0.340252	18.813900
Denmark	Kroner	0.134366	0.162462	8.983200
India	Rupee	0.018142	0.021935	1.212900
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217677	0.263193	14.553000
Mexico	New Peso	0.073799	0.089230	4.933900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.533623	0.645203	35.675900
Norway	Kroner	0.123723	0.149593	8.271600
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014421	0.017437	0.964200
South Africa	Rand	0.132118	0.159744	8.832900
Korea	Won	0.000695	0.000840	0.046400
Sweden	Kroner	0.111576	0.134907	7.459500
Syria	Pound	0.018848	0.022789	1.260100
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024311	0.029394	1.625300
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000519	0.000627	0.034700

No free lunch . . .

From page B4

that would otherwise give farmers the option to seek the best prices, rather than settle for the low price offered by the trader who comes to his farm with a truck, or who had lent him money at the start of the cropping season.

Myth 2: We should not be lowering our import tariffs because our neighbors are not lowering theirs as fast.

There are two things wrong with this assertion. The first is an error of fact; the second is an error of argument. First, contrary to some observations, we have not been "too aggressive" in lowering tariffs. Among the Asean-5, our average tariffs have been higher than Malaysia and Singapore, lower than Thailand and Indonesia. Thus, we are in the middle. If we had indeed been somewhat aggressive in the 1990s, it was because we had a longer way to go in instilling competitiveness in our production sectors. Both our producers and our government had for too long become complacent about spending for productivity-enhancing investments, whether in state-of-the art technologies (on the part of the private sector), or in vital infrastructure and support services like farm-to-market roads, postharvest facilities, and effective credit mechanisms (on the part of government). Trade protection provided a buffer for inefficiency that perpetuated such complacency.

But more importantly, that Thailand and Indonesia continue to have higher average tariffs for certain products is irrelevant to our own trade policy stance. If those countries choose to tolerate a higher degree of inefficiency than ourselves, it should not be our problem; indeed, it should be an advantage for us when we compete in the outside markets. And if they charge a higher tariff rate for, say, sugar; is it because we want to export sugar to them that we complain? In most cases, products for which this complaint is cited are net importables rather than exportables from our standpoint. Thus, their higher tariff shouldn't hurt us, and as pointed out above, when it comes to competing outside, it can only help us.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

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CC@ TAGAYTAY	380K	S'WOODS "A"	450K	RIVIERA CC	20K
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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,400,000
Baguio Country Club	650,000	680,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	70,000
Camp John Hay	200,000	220,000
Canlubang	400,000	450,000
Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	150,000	160,000
Cebu Country Club	1,200,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	160,000	200,000
Club Filipino	120,000	160,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	340,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	165,000	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	220,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	10,800,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,100,000
Manila Polo	Please Call	2,300,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	300,000	400,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	550,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	400,000
Metroclub "A"	-	100,000
Mimosa (Individual)	-	170,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
Montemar (Corporate)	35,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	200,000	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	300,000	400,000
Puerto Azul	-	100,000
Quezon City Sports Club	Please Call	200,000
Rockwell	-	380,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	80,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	170,000	180,000
Spa & Lodge	600,000	800,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,000,000	1,250,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	220,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	330,000	370,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	830,000
Tagaytay Midlands	670,000	700,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	140,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	200,000	250,000
Valley Golf	250,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,000,000	7,000,000

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As of December 8, 2003

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Baguio Country Club	750,000	650,000
Canyon Woods	160,000	100,000
Camp John Hay	-	200,000
Capitol Hills	170,000	150,000
Calatagan Golf Club A/B**	70,000/Pls. Call	-
Cebu Country Club	-	1,230,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	155,000
Club Filipino	150,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	300,000/450,000**	-
Eastridge	100,000	70,000
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fontana D/C*/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	190,000/220,000*/250,000**	190,000**
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	10,000,000/11,500,000*	-
Manila Polo	-	2,200,000
Manila Yacht Club	550,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	410,000/500,000*	500,000*
Metropolitan Club	100,000	-
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	150,000	110,000/250,000*
Mt. Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	230,000/300,000*	-
Phil. Columbian	65,000	-
Puerto Azul A/B	100,000/150,000*	-
Punta Fuego	-	400,000
Quezon City Sports Club A	-	165,000
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	140,000/150,000*/380,000**	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	360,000	-
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Sherwoods A/B*/C**	70,000/Pls. Call*	-
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Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	-
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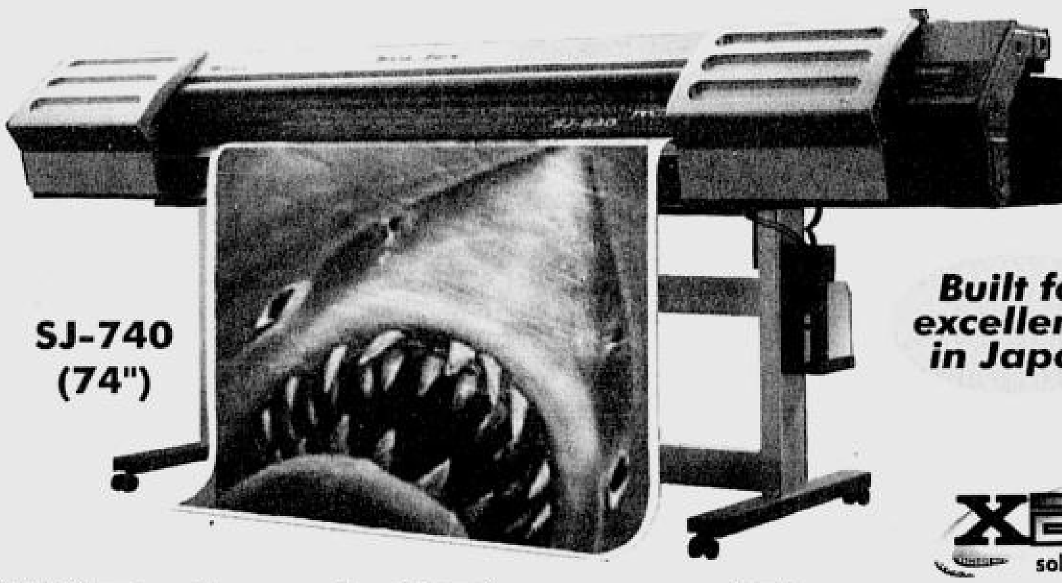

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Price deflation

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THERE seems to be no end to the troubles that have dogged PriceSmart from its ill choice of its first Philippine partner to its entanglement with the Erap camp.

Now the San Diego, California-based warehouse shopping chain is facing class action suits in the United States for having overstated its recent sales in the combined Philippines and Guam operations.

PriceSmart disclosed last month that it had identified "accounting errors" in the process of closing its financial statement for fiscal 2003. The errors resulted in the Nasdaq-listed chain overstating its net warehouse sales by about $16.6 million, or 2.7 percent, during fiscal year 2002, and during the first nine months of fiscal 2003 by $12.7 million, or 2.5 percent.

"Restatement of these sales amounts will not affect the company's reported net income or loss per share, nor will affect the company's balance sheet," the company's interim president/CEO, Robert Price, tried to assure rattled investors.

Notwithstanding the restatement, PriceSmart's external auditor, Ernst & Young, said it would not withdraw its 2002 report. The 2002 Philippine audit had had been completed by Punongbayan and Araullo, Ernst & Young's local partner before it switched to SGV.

Still, as a result of the news, PriceSmart dropped below $8 per share, an 80-percent decline from its class period high of more than $42 per share, noted Scott + Scott, one of the law firms representing the plaintiffs. It last traded Friday at $5.79.

The damage suits claim PriceSmart had violated US securities laws by issuing a series of materially false and misleading statements to the market that artificially inflated the price of PriceSmart shares.

In addition to the overstatement, PriceSmart said it also expects more than $20 million in losses for the fourth quarter of the year mainly due to lower-than-expected sales as well as lower margins resulting from markdowns and "specific problems" in the Philippines and the Dominican Republic.

PriceSmart closed its Ortigas branch in August, after only less than two years of operation. Its new Guam branch, which is being administered from Manila, will also shut down by year's end.

And its Parañaque warehouse will not open until April 2004, according to the grapevine, despite a disclosure as late as July that the Parañaque branch was on schedule for a November 2003 opening, in time for the Yuletide spending.

Special US flights

IN a bid to catch a bigger share of the Christmas traffic from the Philippines, Northwest Airlines is offering special fares for flights routed via Osaka, instead of the usual but traffic-heavy Tokyo route.

The US carrier is offering an $806-coach class roundtrip fare from Manila to any East Coast destination via Osaka for Dec. 14, 15, 21, and 22 departures.

The return trip to Manila may be taken within 90 days.

Like last year, New York City and most of New England will likely experience another White Christmas, what with the season's first major storm already having dumped eight inches of snow in Central Park Friday.

Heard through the grapevine

RCBC still has yet to entice a new president and now it may also have to look for another treasury head.

The bank's highly regarded Jaime Panganiban is leaving by year's end to join his son who is going to college in England.

The elder Panganiban will officially be on a sabbatical for a year, supposedly so he could also pursue graduate studies.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

SEC orders Standard Chartered to stop offering, selling securities

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has ordered Standard Chartered Bank to immediately cease and desist from further offering, soliciting or selling unregistered securities to the public after the corporate watchdog's investigation concluded that the foreign bank had been engaged in such alleged illegal activity to the detriment of the investing public.

In a cease-and-desist order (CDO) issued Friday, the SEC gave the bank a non-extendible period of five days from receipt of the order to show cause why the order should not be made permanent. The SEC also directed the bank to state in its request whether it would want to settle the case.

Standard Chartered Bank said it would file a motion to lift the CDO, noting that the bank had stopped such activity since two years ago.

The bank has repeatedly maintained that it had not been selling unregistered securities. Standard Chartered Bank Philippine CEO Simon Morris earlier said that the bank's trust department invested in foreign mutual funds only when directed by clients.

"A careful perusal of the records of the case shows that Standard Chartered Bank is not merely disseminating information but is engaging in the business of selling Global Third Party Mutual Funds to the public," the SEC, through general counsel Vernette Umali-Paco, said.

The bank continuously dealt with the overseas mutual funds despite a directive from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to stop and with full knowledge prior registration of the funds with the Commission should be made before these could be offered to the public, the SEC added.

The SEC recalled that as early as 1997 it had received complaints against Standard Chartered Bank for selling securities without prior registration through the offer of international mutual funds. A year later, the bank assured the finance secretary at the time that the bank had withdrawn the product and this would not be offered again until proper clearances were obtained.

In 1999, the bank inquired from the BSP whether foreign funds could be included in a trust portfolio upon a client's directive. In response, the BSP directed the bank not to include investment in global mutual funds issued abroad in the trust portfolio unless these were registered with the Commission.

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318L	2002	Black Sapphire	5,800	PHP 1,550,000
318L	2003	Titanium Silver	4,000	PHP 1,575,000
318L	2003	Titanium Silver	3,000	PHP 1,575,000
325 exec	2002	Titanium Silver	2,500	PHP 2,350,000
318 M Sport	2002	Titanium Silver	3,500	PHP 1,900,000
325i	2002	Cosmos Black	10,447	PHP 2,100,000
325 Touring	2001	Titanium Silver	2,450	PHP 2,650,000

BMW Certified Pre-Owned Cars:

Model	Year	Color	Mileage	Price
745Li	2002	Black Sapphire	5,500	PHP 6,900,000
X5 4.6is	2002	Estoril Blue	8,600	PHP 6,500,000
525 Exec	2002	Steel Blue	7,000	PHP 2,800,000
525 Exec	2002	Alpine White	6,000	PHP 3,000,000

Other Cars Available:

Model	Year	Color	Mileage	Price
525 Limo	2002	Titanium Silver	10,323	PHP 2,600,000
525 M Sport	2003	Black Sapphire	8,411	PHP 3,150,000
730i	1996	Cosmos Black	38,000	PHP 2,250,000

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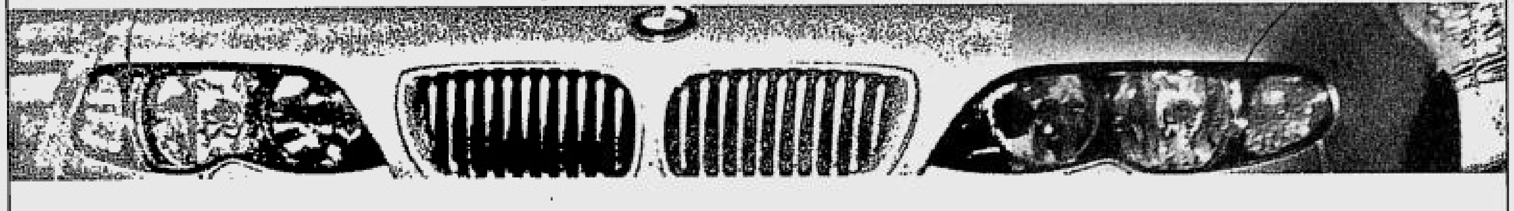

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PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF ANESTHESIOLOGISTS, INC.

36th Annual Convention

December 9-10, 2003 • Westin Philippine Plaza, Pasay City

"The Anesthesia Specialty... Challenging Equipoise"

MESSAGES

My warmest felicitations to the officers and members of the **Philippine Society of Anesthesiologist, Inc.** on your *36th Annual Convention.*

I commend you for your invaluable role in improving the health of our countrymen. Your efforts to upgrade your competencies are vital in our quest to address the health requirements of our growing population.

I hope you will make your services more accessible to the greater segment of the Filipinos, especially the less fortune. May you intensify your efforts in improving the quality of life of our people.

MABUHAY!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the members and officers of the **Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. (PSA)** as you conduct your **36th Annual Convention** with the theme, *"The Anesthesia Specialty... Challenging Equipoise"*.

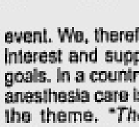
Firstly, I would like to commend the organizers of this convention for once again providing your members an opportunity to share and contribute innovative ideas and vital information on how you can best respond to the emerging issues affecting your profession.

I believe that by providing much-needed information regarding these pressing issues of the time, our anesthesiologists will be properly guided in their decision-making process as they attempt to respond to these challenges. Broadening their opportunities for continuing education and training, the development of viable career options for them as well as strengthening the linkages among healthcare organizations that will provide a broad base of support are just some of the possible courses of action that may help strengthen the ranks of anesthesiologists nationwide.

As partners in health, let us band together in forging greater unity and cooperation among our people as we aim to achieve our common objective of building a healthier, stronger and more progressive Philippines.

Congratulations and *Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

MANUEL M. DAYRIT, MD, MSc
Secretary , Department of Health



With sincere sentiments of fellowship, we greet on behalf of the Officers and Board of Governors of the Philippine Medical Association the officers and members of the Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. on the occasion of its 36th Annual Convention.

We at the PMA are very grateful to the PSA for allowing us to share in the observance of this auspicious event. We, therefore, take justifiable pride in drumming up interest and support for the successful realization of your goals. In a country where a crying need for safe and quality anesthesia care is still heard, your convention anchored on the theme. *"The Anesthesia Specialty...Challenging Equipoise,"* couldn't have come at a more appropriate time. Thus we hail your commitment and efforts to continue addressing the need to upgrade anesthesia care and service through glittering showcases of interactive and informative sharing of expertise and knowledge. Let us all look forward to a most successful and productive convention.

Congratulations, and here's wishing you the Christ Child's blessings this Yuletide. Mabuhay ang Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.

JOSE T. SANCHEZ, MD
President, Philippine Medical Association

Programme of Activities

December 9, 2003 (Tuesday)

DAY 1

0700H	**REGISTRATION**
0830-0930H	**OPENING CEREMONIES**
0930-1030H	**Dr. QUINTIN J. GOMEZ ORATION** Speaker: **Dr. Lydia M. Egay (16th QJG Awardee)**
1030-1100H	**OPENING & VIEWING OF TRADE EXHIBITS**
1100-1200H	**PLENARY LECTURE 1:** Professionalism in Anesthesia Practice Speaker: **Dr. Merle F. Dela Cruz-Odi**
1200-1300H	**LUNCHEON SYMPOSIUM 1** Inhalational Anesthesia or Intravenous Anesthesia? Speakers: **Dr. Lydia M. Egay & Dr. Merle F. Dela Cruz-Odi**
1300-1400H	**SYMPOSIUM 1:** Drug Dependent Patients: How Do We Treat Their Pain? Speaker: **Dr. Francis O. Javier**
1400-1500H	**SYMPOSIUM 2** Multimodal Approach to Acute Pain Management Speaker: **Dr. Luzviminda S. Kwong**
1515-1615H	**SYMPOSIUM 3:** The Truth about Intraoperative Recall Speaker: **Dr. Benjamin M. Rigor**
1615-1715H	**CASE DISCUSSION:** Conjoined Twins: The Separation Dilemma Panelists: **Dr. Iluminada T. Camagay,** Anesthesiologist **Dr. Benjamin M. Rigor,** Anesthesiologist **Dr. Alfredo Acosta,** Surgeon **Dr. Wilma A. Baltazar,** Surgeon
1600-1900H	**PSA CHAPTER DELEGATES MEETING**
1900H	**FELLOWSHIP NIGHT**

December 10, 2003 (Wednesday)

Day 2

0730-0830H	Breakfast Symposium -Kapihan sa PSA
0830-1100H	**GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING**
1100-1200H	**PLENARY LECTURE 2** Equipoise in Anesthesia Research or Critical Appraisal of RCT's in Anesthesia Speaker: **Dr. Ma. Minerva P. Calimag**
1145-1300H	**LUNCHEON SYMPOSIUM 2:** Issues on COX-2 Inhibition: Evidence from Published Data Speaker: **Dr. Grace Anne B. Herbosa**
1300-1400H	**SYMPOSIUM 4 (PSCVA):** Intraoperative Arrhythmias Speaker: **Dr. Jose Tirona**
1400-1500H	**SYMPOSIUM 5:** Crystalloids Vs. Colloids in Perioperative Care Speaker: **Dr. Elmar Rudolf**
1515-1615H	**SYMPOSIUM 6:** Combining Anesthesia Techniques: Boon or Bane? Speaker: **Dr. Ludivino G. De Guzman**
1615-1715H	**PANEL DISCUSSION:** The Patient and Informed Decision Making Panelists: **Dr. Elmar Perez** - Anesthesiologist **Dr. Mario De Villa** – Surgeon **Dr. Antonio Rebosa** – Legal Consultant
1715-1730H	**CLOSING CEREMONIES**

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Cellphone 0917-8329069 Email. psa@i-manila.com.ph

REGISTRATION FEES:

Trainee	P 1,200.00	Regular Non-Life	P 1,800.00
Life	FREE	Non-Member	P 2,000.00

MESSAGES

I would like to extend my warm welcome to all the delegates of the 36th Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists.

Because of the dynamic changes in the field of anesthesia for the past 5 years, the Society has decided on the theme **Anesthesia Specialty... Challenging Equipoise.** Is there really a need to alter the balance of culture and practice existing in our specialty? Should we go to the extent of challenging this balance? Will this improve our patient care and result in a leap for our specialty? Is it about time to re-examine the moral and ethical values that prevail among our anesthesiologists? These are some of the questions that we hope will be answered in this convention.

I enjoin everybody to actively participate in the discussions of issues and maximize your time for this two-day affair at the Westin Philippine Plaza. The success of this convention will always be dependent on your presence.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

FIDEL C. PAYAWAL, MD, DPBA
President
Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.

My felicitations and a warm welcome to all delegates and guests!

The 36th Annual Postgraduate Course & Convention Organizing Committee has been hard at the task to bring you this year's program of activities. The intriguing theme of **Anesthesia Specialty... Challenging Equipoise** was chosen to appeal to and fascinate your interest. Needless to say an excellent line-up of foreign and our very own local experts will constitute the faculty for the scientific program which will surely challenge and satisfy your intellectual equipoise!

The new venue for this year's convention may pose as a challenge for some, given our famous traffic and this month of the year. We shall match your effort with the promise also of a fellowship night filled with a bountiful harvest of crops and good food, tender beef roasting (hmmm... can you smell it?) and many kegs of beer in the setting of a barn. So, Howdy folks get into your western duds and see ya al' there!

I invite your avid participation to make this another memorable occasion - of intellectual growth, of new and renewed friendships, of genuine camaraderie amongst peers and colleagues. All these strengthen our bonds and make us proud of being part of the Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.

Salamat po at Mabuhay.

AMELIA MANZANO-MANZON, MD, DPBA
Vice-President
Philippine Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.
Chair, Organizing Committee

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Nov. deficit seen way below ceiling at P14B

THE MACAPAGAL administration is confident that the November budget deficit will be well within the P17.8-billion target.

A government source said that based on preliminary data, the fiscal gap for the month was only P14 billion given the higher collections of the Bureaus of Customs and Internal Revenue.

"I think the November deficit would be below the target," said Finance Officer-in-Charge Juanita Amatong.

The full-year deficit could be safely below the P202-billion target unless the government would spend more than P10 billion this month to finance expenditure items including the provision of the P5,000 in cash gift to about 1 million government employees.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the BIR had already exceeded its P40.4-billion collection goal last month after banks settled their back gross receipts taxes.

Parayno said 24 banks had paid about P700 million in unpaid GRT for 2001 and 2002. He was waiting for other banks to follow suit.

The Bureau of Customs said last week that it had raised P8.988 billion in tariffs and duties in November against a target of P8.84 billion.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin earlier said the government had likely kept its spending within the ceiling of P72.2 billion last month even as constructive cash or expenditures related to foreign-assisted projects still threatened to bloat expenses.

The government needed at least P54.4 billion in revenue in November to meet the deficit target. The BIR and the Customs already raised about P50 billion.

The Bureau of Treasury and other agencies collecting fees and charges are expected to have contributed a significant amount to state coffers last month.

The Treasury earns largely from interest on deposits following pre-funded bond issues. It had already exceeded its full-year collection goal as early as October.

"It's only a month to go. I think we are very comfortable in meeting the

NOV. DEFICIT/ B9

National ID: Bad idea that won't go away

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE NATIONAL ID is a bad idea that just won't go away. Like a plugged coin, it keeps coming back.

The first official attempt to install a national ID was in 1997 when President Ramos signed Administrative Order 308, titled "Adoption of a National Computerized Identification Reference System." The core of the AO was, "The Population Reference Number (PRN) generated by the National Statistics Office (NSO) shall serve as the common reference number to establish a linkage among concerned agencies (emphasis mine). The Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC) shall coordinate with the different Social Security and services agencies to establish the standards in the use of Biometrics Technology and in computer application designs in their respective systems."

The proposed linkage did not scare me. It terrified me. It meant that IACC could access into my personal data at the SSS, BIR, foreign affairs, national statistics, veterans affairs, city hall, education department, and so forth, without my prior knowledge and consent.

This was invasion of privacy, the main reason why the Supreme Court ruled that the AO was unconstitutional.

The Supreme Court had another reason for striking down the AO: Malacañang intruded on the right of Congress to pass laws. Now, the House has passed a national ID bill and the President is pushing it. I have not read the bill. But it must cure the AO's unconstitutionality.

The new, improved, all-purpose national ID is being touted as a wonder key to government services. The card will carry the holder's medical, dental, insurance, credit records, and a host of other information that will facilitate doing business with government agencies. All these in one standard-size plastic card?

Our Social Security System now supplies its members with a biometrics ID card. The card carries a member's name, date of birth and serial number. Most important, the prints of the index fingers are encoded on the card. When the member wants to take out a loan, an electronic doodad matches the prints of his warm index fingers with the cold prints encoded in the card. The member having been duly identified, the databank is then accessed and the loan processed. Notice that the card holds no records. The records are all in the databank.

Now, the new, improved, all-purpose biometrics card is supposed to consolidate the several cards in my wallet. Fine, so long as nobody digs into my private and personal records in the various government agencies without my previous knowledge and consent.

When you want to buy a life insurance policy, the application form asks for your personal data. Then the agent puts in his report. Finally, you have to pass a medical exam, which can be quite comprehensive is you are buying a substantial amount. If you had been recently hospitalized, the company can dig into your hospital records only because included in the application form is your written authority for the company to do so. The company keeps your records in the strictest confidence for the rest of your life.

Also, the new, improved, all-purpose card is supposed to be foolproof. There is no such thing as a foolproof system. Any system devised by a human being will, sooner than later, be cracked by some other human being, probably by a whiz kid in grade school. In the US, the problem of teenage drinking is growing because kids are able to electronically produce authentic looking ID cards.

Going back to the Supreme Court, the decision also said that if a citizen's constitutional right to privacy is to be violated, the authorities must "satisfactorily show the presence of compelling state interests." Indeed, when the security of the republic is threatened, the authorities must rise to defend it, even at the expense of the citizenry's constitutional right to privacy. The security of the state is far more precious than individual rights.

This is why the new, improved, all-purpose ID card is being touted as an anti-terror weapon. This wonder card is the Philippine contribution to the worldwide arsenal against terror. We better make sure Osama bin Laden knows this. He will probably die laughing and the world will be rid of him.

Finally, if a Filipino carries this new, improved, all-purpose ID card, does it mean he is a good boy? And if he does not, is he a bad boy?

GOINGS ON

Top franchise holder

ROASTERS Philippines Inc. earned plaudits from top officials for being the most successful operation among all franchise holders of Kenny Rogers Roasters restaurants in the world.

This was disclosed by RAP general manager and CEO Wang Yong Cheng and executive director Francis Lee of the Berjaya Group who visited the Philippines recently.

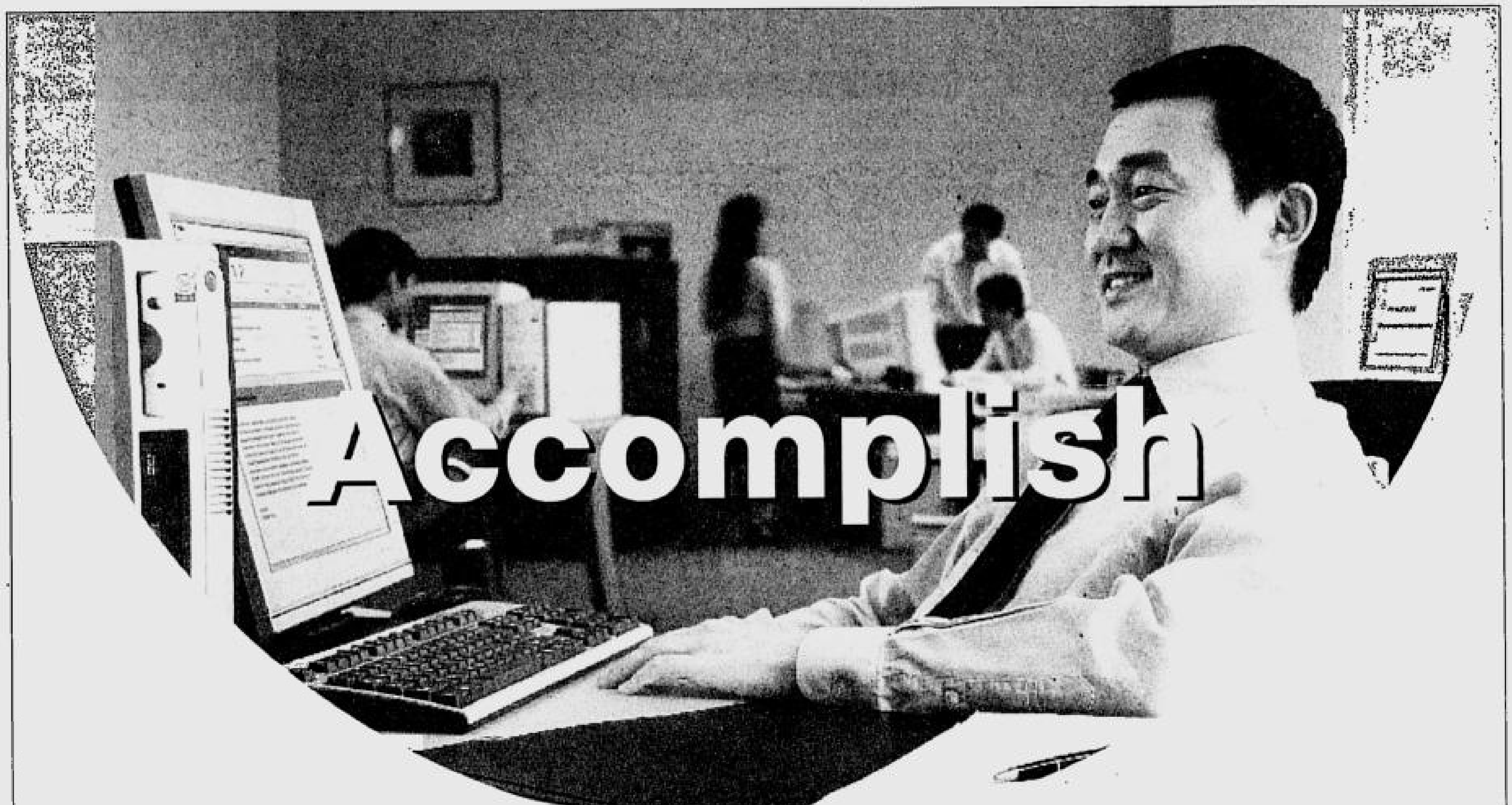
The two came to the country to confer with Roasters Philippines president and CEO Bernadine T. Sy about future plans.

In view of its outstanding record, Roasters Philippines will be given a 10-year extension of the master development agreement to cover its expansion program and the opening of additional stores in the coming year.

Philips, Nike team up

GLOBAL industry leaders Philips Consumer Electronics and Nike have teamed up to create a new product line aimed at today's active consumers. The Portable Sports Audio features handy music equipment that combines the design and performance innovations of Nike with the technology and research of Philips to create products that enhance the quality of workouts and other physical activities.

The new line features M3 players, MP3-CD players, FM radio and headphones designed for sport activities, small and lightweight, with rubber control buttons for easier grip and equipped with shock protection for skip-free music even during the most vigorous workout. These come with an armband, headphones, remote control, hand strap and butterfly apparel clip for extra convenience.



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Transco starts talks with buyers of assets

By Ronnel W. Domingo

STATE firm National Transmission Corp. is starting talks with three distribution utilities for the sale of subtransmission assets (STAs). Transco hopes to close deals with these utilities within the month.

Transco president Alan T. Ortiz said in an interview that the firm would begin today negotiations with San Fernando Electric Power Co., Cabanatuan Electric Corp. and Manila Electric Co.

Ortiz said Transco hoped to sell the assets within the month although it was ready to exhaust all means to arrive at deals with buyers.

Under the rules issued by the Energy Regulatory Commission, lines used to deliver electricity from power generators to distribution utilities were regarded as transmission assets, while those used to get power from the utilities to end-users were classified as sub-transmission assets.

"Sale of the (STAs) is a win-win situation for all concerned," the official said.

"This will help Transco generate revenue and reduce its operating expenses while the utilities will be able to improve the transmission facilities they are using. The consumers, for their part, will benefit through better service."

Ortiz said talks would open with the three utilities mentioned because they were the most aggressive among potential buyers.

Transco data show that 45 distribution utilities have expressed interest in acquiring government-owned STAs.

As early as a year ago, Transco had explored possibilities of sale with 15 of these utilities.

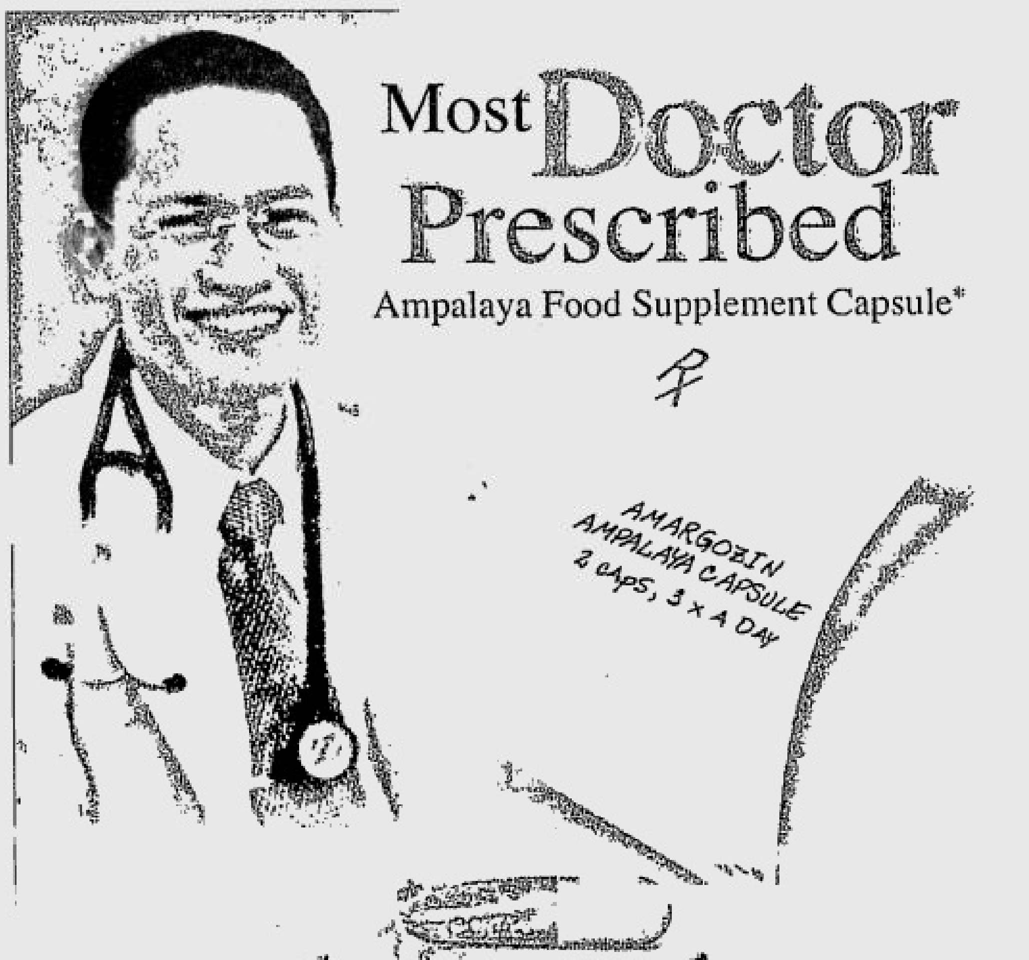
In an interview last week, Meralco president Jesus Francisco said the distribution giant was interested in buying three sub-transmission lines and related substations.

"We want to know whether Transco would require immediate payment or allow us to takeover the assets, upgrade and operate them while (deferring our payment)," Francisco said.

He said Meralco's acquisition of STAs would help improve its distributions system but that the firm's cash flow problems had to be considered.

Last month, Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. chief operating officer

Erramon I. Aboitiz told the INQUIRER that the company was interested in two or three sub-transmission lines located in Pampanga and Davao City.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RAPU RAPU PROJECT

Lafayette seeks $30M in financing

By Christine A. Gaylican

LAFAYETTE Philippines (Inc.), proponent of the $45-million Rapu Rapu Polymetallic Mine Project in Legaspi, Albay, is seeking the financial backing of ABN-Amro Rothschild.

The Australian mining firm is tapping Rothschild for a $20-$30 million loan for the project.

"We saw that Rothschild could give us better terms for the financing. Hopefully, we will obtain the needed financing by the first quarter (next year)," Lafayette Philippines country manager Rod Watt told the INQUIRER at the sidelines of the Philippine Mining Conference last week.

Lafayette Philippines was not able to reach a deal with Standard Bank of London Ltd., the first bank that conducted due diligence on the project in the last two years.

Rothschild is now doing a due diligence on the project which is expected to be completed by end-January.

Watt said that actual production would likely start by early 2005.

The Rapu Rapu Mine Project is said to be capable of producing 37,000 tons of copper concentrates, 25,000 tons of zinc and 50,000 ounces of gold yearly over a period of six to seven years.

The said project is also seen generating some $300 million in revenue for the government.

Breaktime ...

From page B2

puters are going faster. Their speed, in fact, doubles every 18 months. Hi-tech cheating, to them, is possible in 2004.

Unfortunately for those lagging behind in the surveys on presidential candidates, the Comelec ACM does not use 40-bit encryption. It uses a 168-bit version.

For the sake of Supreme Court justices, let's say that computers become a million times faster than they are today.

(Based on the present rate of development, a doubling of speed every 18 months, they can become a million times faster in 20 years.)

If you start tinkering with the security codes of the Comelec 168-bit ACM right after the elections, using "brute force," by the time you are done, you will only be much much older than the age of the universe today. That long!

***

YOU can actually do financial transactions on the Internet, such as paying your bills through your bank's website. So can somebody use "brute force" to steal all you money?

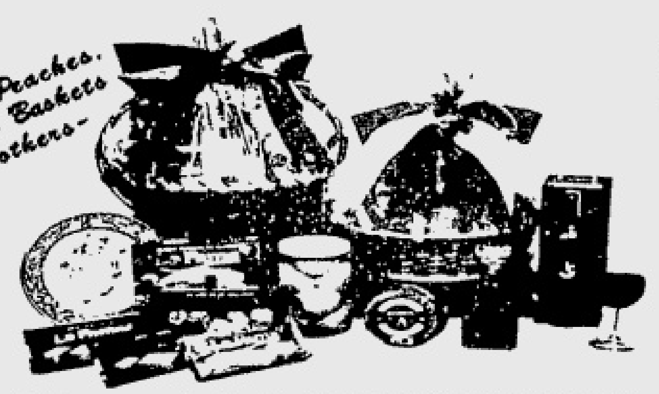
The banks are actually using 128-bit encryption. With this type, "brute force' will need roughly 15 billion years to break the code.

Again, the Comelec ACM uses not just 128-bit, but 168-bit. To break it will, by using all the computers in the entire Internet, take trillions of years, which to us down here in our barangay, is already close to eternity.

And from what I gathered from the Comelec, the machines even use what it calls "1024-bit Digital Certificates," which are what the US military uses for codes to launch missiles. You know—to start a nuclear war.

That makes hi-tech cheating in the elections, particularly by breaking the Comelec ACM security code, virtually impossible.

Now, cheating through "vote buying" is another story. The only question is, who has the money to do that? Clue: deficit!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Nov. deficit seen ...

From page B8

P202-billion deficit target for the year," said Boncodin.

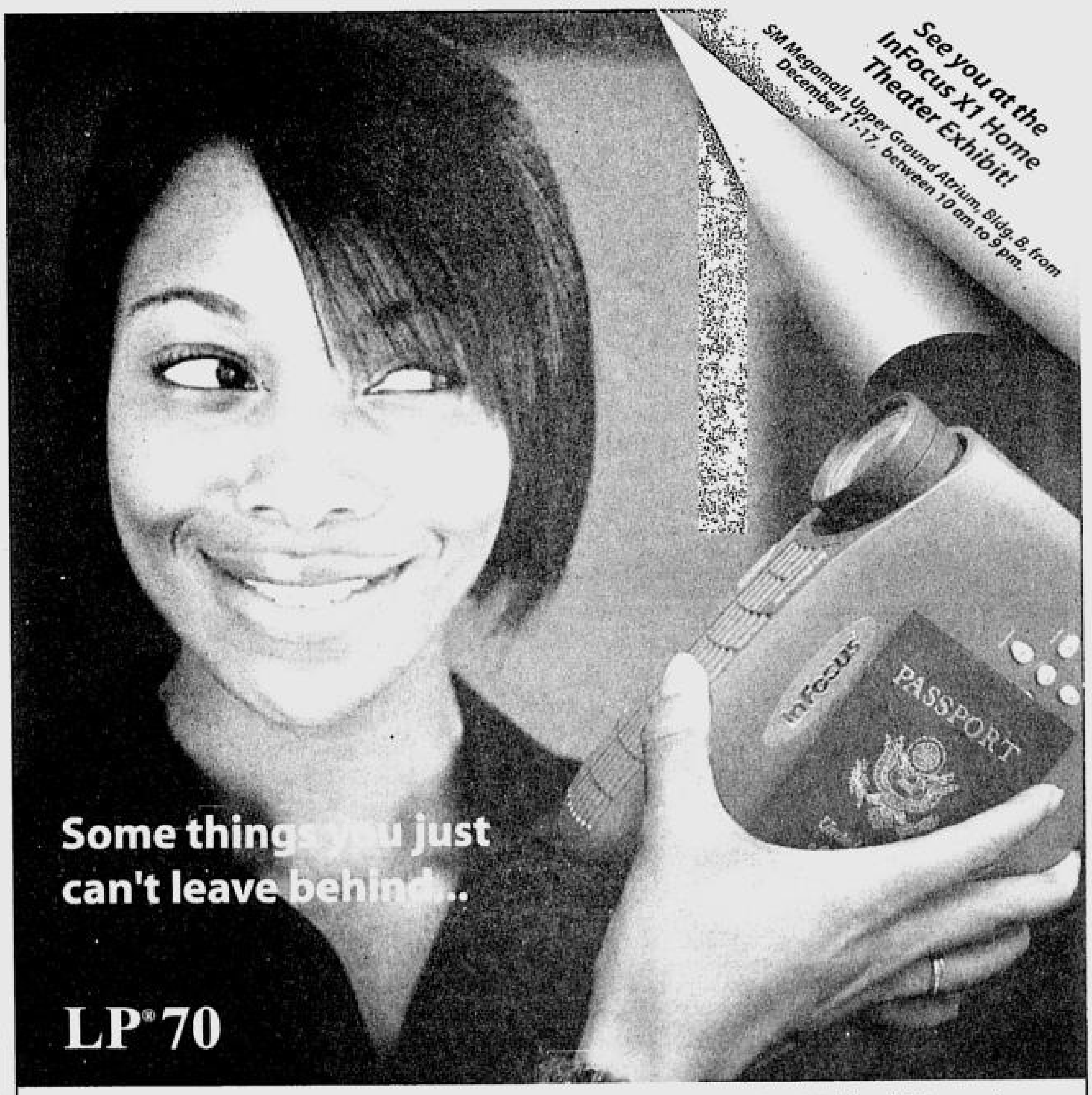
Bernardo said the bureau's full-year goal of P100.56 billion was in the bag while Parayno was also confident of meeting the P424-billion goal this year.

As of October, the gap between revenue and expenditure stood at P163.88 billion or P8 billion lower than the ceiling of P171.88 billion for the 10-month period.

Boncodin, however, said the additional disbursement of P5 billion this month would not widen the deficit beyond the target for the year since the government would be using the savings in previous months.

Investors are still concerned over the ability of the government to rein in the fiscal deficit next year because of election-related pressures on the budget.

Boncodin and Amatong said that fiscal discipline would remain strong in the coming year. Both are committed to keeping the gap between revenue and expenditure next year to P197.8 billion.



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MABUHAY VINYL CORPORATION

MESSAGES

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

Our warmest greetings to the Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation (MVC) for the inauguration of its new Ion Exchange Membrane (IEM) Plant in Assumption Heights, Iligan City on 08 December 2003.

The establishment of this state-of-the-art chlor-alkali plant is a concrete response of MVC in particular and industry in general to the challenge of generating employment and putting up additional capacity for the chemical requirements of other sectors. We note, in fact, that the industrial requirement for chlor-alkali has been increasing at a fast rate that domestic production of the same could not catch up. Indeed, this is a clear indication that industrial activity in the country is on a sustained mode.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is one with MVC and with the chemicals industry, as a whole, in their continuing commitment and relentless efforts to achieve sustainable development and industrial competitiveness through integrated and rationalized industry plans and programs. These measures taken by the industry become more significant considering that the chemicals sector is a basic industry and is therefore, a major component in our economic development.

We are confident that this occasion would be instrumental in realizing our fervent commitment for industry expansion to utilize the numerous opportunities that lay ahead of us.

Our sincerest congratulations and best wishes for the continuing success of Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation!

Mabuhay!

MAR Roxas
Secretary

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

It is my greatest honor and privelege to greet Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation on the occasion of the inauguration of its Ion Exchange Membrane Plant on 8 December 2003.

Every man in every lawful calling is a useful man. But one principal reason why men are often useless is they neglect their own profession or calling. They divide and shift their attention among a multiplicity of objects and pursuits. Excellence is never granted to man, but as a reward to industrious wisdom and labor.

There is no art or science that is too difficult for industry to attain. It is the gift of industry and ingenuity that makes man understood and valued in all countries. In every rank great and small, it is industry that supports us all because industry is not the only instrument of improvement, but the foundation of pleasure.

As man's basic needs are satisfied, a series of other needs evolves. The satisfaction of these more complex and diverse needs requires the exercise of ever-greater efficiency, which is gained through continued specialization and the evolution of technology in an industry.

The pace of industrial growth varies from country to country. In our country traditional values and methods are already challenged. New institutional mechanisms are created to allow the allocation of resources among new technologies. Global economic trends drive our country to increase investment rate and make our economy self-sustaining by having a wide range of well-developed industries that are using and developing the latest technology, skills and mechanisms.

The benefits of industrial economy are many but they may be summarized in one word: efficiency. Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation's IEM Expansion Project is one benefiting from efficiency; one that has passed performance guarantee tests. The IEM Project sends a vibrant signal of economic recovery and growth for Iligan City having developed by credible innovators. It is a project that will have tremendous economic contributions to Iligan City.

With the blessings of the Almighty we shall endeavor to make Iligan City a haven for progress and development providing current investments and future locators security and sustainability.

Long Live Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation.

Alipio Cirilo V. Badelles
Representative, 1st District, Iligan City,

The City Government and the citizenry of Iligan congratulate the owners, management and staff of Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation on its successful commissioning and following commercial operation of its Ion Exchange Membrane (IEM) Plant at Assumption Heights. The expansion project further enhances its pre-eminent position as the country's leading manufacturer of caustic soda and hydrochloric acid and the Philipine's only producer of chlorine in commercial quantities.

We further commend MVC for investing much in the project in the face of the many industrial setbacks suffered by other companies in our area in the aftermath of the Asian economic downturn beginning in 1997.

Using bipolar type electrolyzers, the new plant which has a capacity of 8,000 DMTPY of caustic soda and 22,000 LMTPY of hydrochloric acid, utilizes the most modern and environment-friendly technology in the chlor-alkali industry.

The new plant will boost the income of the city government which has also suffered a sizable drop in revenues with the closure of operations of three other local plants including the giant National Steel Corporation.

Again our warm felicitations to MVC for its faith and commitment in support of our country's efforts to improve the economy.

Mabuhay!

Franklin M. Quijano
City Mayor

We take pride in inaugurating our new Ion Exchange Membrane (IEM) Chlor-alkali plant today in Iligan City. This investment heralds another source of competitiveness for Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation in response to the growing market demand for our products and the challenges created by higher customer expectations.

Our decision to install this new facility in Lanao del Norte reflects our unwavering faith in Mindanao as a favorable site for manufacturing. The IEM Plant's leading-edge Japanese technology enables our company to upgrade product quality and achieve a higher level of operating efficiency.

We would like to share this corporate milestone with our customers, shareholders, business partners and employees, as an expression of our heartfelt gratitude for their continued support and confidence. We are inspired to plan for growth to further enhance the value of the company to our stakeholders.

We wish to assure them of our continuing commitment to our Vision of being the country's leading chlor-alkali provider and vendor of choice in the local market.

Mabuhay!

Renato B. Magadia
Chairman and the Board and Chief Executive Office
Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation

Together with the officers and staff of Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation, we inaugurate today the Ion Exchange Membrane Plant in Iligan City.

Early on, the management of MVC had decided that the company cannot continue doing business in the traditional way. With globalization and trade liberalization, investments in facilities have to be made to remain competitive in the industry we have chosen to be in. While the IEM plant is the biggest investment for the company since the seventies, this is only one of several major projects that the company had poured resources into. In the coming days, we shall also be launching a new ship and commence the operation of an expanded depot to complement the IEM Plant expansion.

Iligan has always been a home to Mabuhay Vinyl and by continuing to be the biggest producer and supplier of basic industrial chemicals in the chlor-alkali industry we can meaningfully reciprocate the city's hospitality.

Welcome and Mabuhay!

Edwin Ll. Umali
President and Chief Operating Officer
Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation

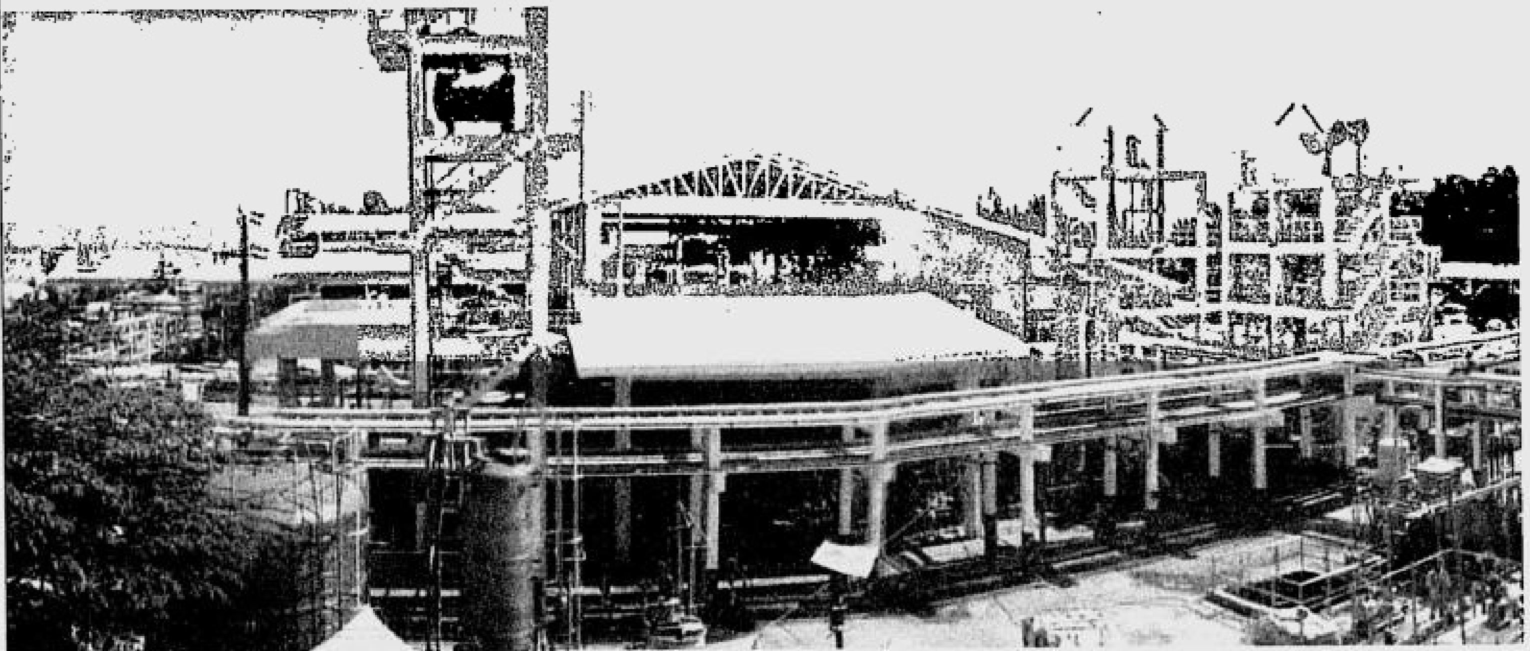
State of the art IEM Plant inauguration today

Mabuhay Vinyl proudly announces the inauguration today of its newly constructed Ion Exchange Membrane (IEM) Plant in Iligan City.

The IEM Plant is the biggest expansion of Mabuhay in its Iligan Plant since 1979 and adds 8,000 metric tons/year of caustic soda and 22,000 metric tons/year of hydrochloric acid. It employs state-of-the-art chlor-alkali production technology co-developed by Chlorine Engineers and Tosoh Corporation of Japan, and is the first of its kind in the Philippines.

The IEM Plant enhances Mabuhay's competitiveness and is proof of our long term commitment to serve the Philippine chlor-alkali market.

MVC customers can expect better product quality, reliability and unparalleled product availability.



Panoramic View of IEM Plant

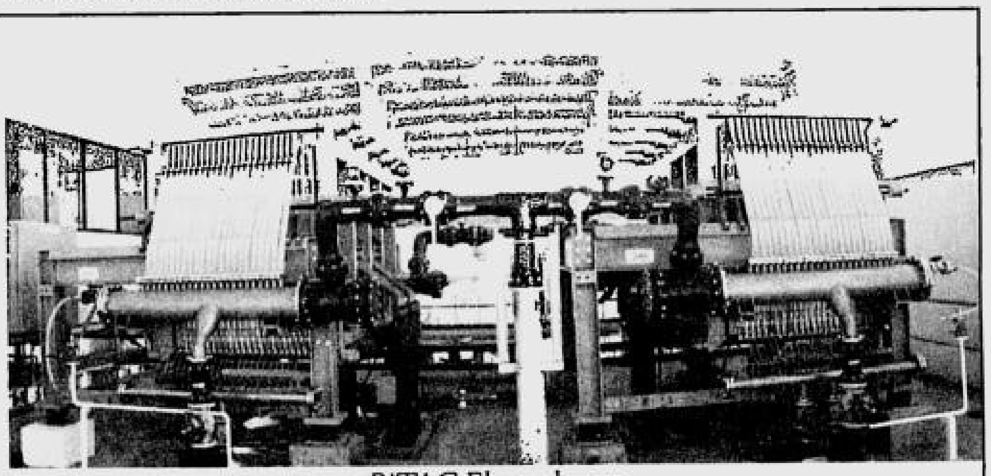
IEM PLANT SPECIFICATIONS:

Equipment Supplier
- Chlorine Engineers Corp. Ltd.

General Contractor
- Aboitiz Construction Group Inc.

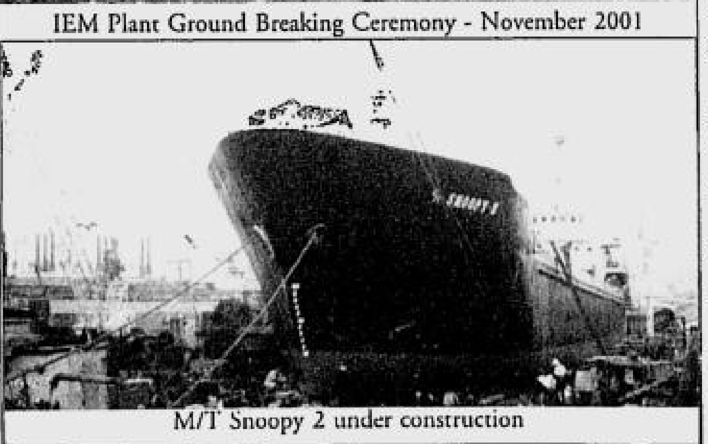
Products and Capacity
- Liquid Caustic Soda (8,000 DMTPY)
- Hydrochloric Acid (22,000 MTPY)

Investment - PhP 350 Million



BiTAC Electrolyzers

IEM Plant Ground Breaking Ceremony - November 2001



M/T Snoopy 2 under construction

To further strengthen its position in the market, Mabuhay has ordered the construction of a new Hydrochloric Acid Tanker and several caustic soda storage tanks. Scheduled to sail before the year ends, M/T SNOOPY II will enable the company to serve its growing customers and bring product availability to unprecedented levels. On the other hand, additional storage tanks will mean greater flexibility in meeting the growing needs of the caustic soda market.

BUSINESS OFFICES

MVC Head Office - Salcedo Village, Makati City
Mabuhay Premium Bleach Plant - Sta. Rosa, Laguna
BBTI Depot - Bauan, Batangas
Cebu Sales Office and Depot
Pulupandan Depot - Negros Occidental
Iligan Plant and Sales Office
Davao Sales Office and Depot

HISTORY

Mabuhay Rubber Corporation was founded by Judge Guillermo B. Guevara as a shoe factory in 1935. However the production facilities were completely destroyed during World War II.

In 1963, Judge Guevara with son Victor reorganized the company. The following year, a plant was set up in Iligan, Mindanao to produce caustic soda and polyvinyl chloride resin.

A couple of years later Mabuhay Rubber Corporation was renamed Mabuhay Vinyl Corporation (MVC). At about the same time, the caustic soda plant capacity was increased by 50 percent. PVC polymerization capacity was doubled in 1973 and a chlor-alkali plant using Diaphragm Cells was put on stream in 1979 increasing caustic capacity fourfold. A liquid chlorine plant was included in the expansion to serve new markets. Tank depot facilities in Manila, Cebu, Batangas, and Negros were established to expand market coverage. A specialized ship was acquired to transport hydrochloric acid.

MVC's financial structure was strengthened with the entry of the Bank of the Philippine Islands in 1990. In 1992, the Batangas depot was expanded to include tanks large enough to store several months caustic soda requirements of Luzon customers.

A consortium for the construction of a Luzon PVC resin plant was formed in 1993. At the same time, the PVC plant capacity was raised to 20,000 MT per year.

In 1994, the MVC Premium Bleach Plant (MPBP) at Sta. Rosa, Laguna was inaugurated. This was the largest project undertaken by MVC since the expansion in the 70's.

MPBP was awarded the ISO9002:1994 certificate by SGS Yarsley London in 1995, followed by the entire Luzon operations in 1996. The Iligan Plant passed its ISO9002 certification in 1999. Currently, Iligan Plant has renewed its certification under the ISO9002:2000 version while the others are working for a similar upgrade.

In 1996, MVC formed a joint venture company, Philippine Resins Industries Inc., with BPI, Mitsubishi Corporation and Tosoh Corporation to build a 70,000MTPY Polyvinyl chloride plant in Bataan. The state-of-the-art PVC Plant started commercial operations in December 1998. In 2000, MVC shutdown its PVC Plant in Iligan and divested its 49% shareholdings in PRII to focus on its chlor-alkali business.

Despite the onslaught of globalization, MVC went ahead and constructed a state-of-the-art chlor-alkali plant in Iligan which started commercial operation on October 6, 2003. Today Mabuhay looks at its future with renewed hope that the new plant will enhance profitability and competitiveness in the days to come.

PRODUCTS AND APPLICATIONS

Caustic Soda (NaOH)
- Bottle Washing
- Soap and Detergents
- Water Treatment
- Wastewater Treatment
- Food/Coconut/Oil Mills

Hydrochloric Acid (HCl)
- Semiconductor Manufacture
- Food Production
- Power Industry
- Steel Pickling
- Wastewater Treament

Liquid Chlorine (Cl2)
- Water Treatment
- Water Disinfection
- Bleach Production

Sodium Hypochlorite (NaOCl)
- Laundry Bleach
- Industrial Bleach
- Water Disinfection
- Multi-purpose cleaners

Tariff hike on selected raw materials pushed

By Michelle V. Remo

THE CABINET-LEVEL Tariff and Related Matters committee has endorsed to Malacañang increases in the tariffs on selected raw materials and intermediate products.

The recommendation was made following the conclusion of the TRM's review of all the country's most-favored nation (MFN) tariff rates.

The review was conducted after several local industries complained about the damage inflicted on them by the tariff reduction and the resulting influx of imported goods.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II, who is also co-chair of the TRM, told reporters that the proposed tariff increase covered 627 imported product lines that compete with locally produced raw materials and intermediate products.

Roxas said the committee had likewise endorsed the indefinite extension of the interim increase in tariffs on selected agricultural products that was implemented in May. The increase in tariffs on agricultural products should have lapsed last month.

The agricultural products covered by the increase include cauliflowers, lettuce, and broccoli, among others whose tariffs were raised to as much as 25 percent after local farmers claimed to be badly hurt by cheap imported vegetables.

The review of the tariffs on imported raw materials and intermediate products covered over 4,000 imported product lines, of which 3,672 will be kept at present levels and 258 will be reduced.

Tariffs on imported product lines that are recommended for reduction include raw materials and intermediate products that do not compete with locally produced goods, and that are used by local industries for their production.

The realignment of the tariffs on raw materials and intermediate products is the final phase of the general MFN tariff review conducted by the TRM committee.

In October, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued an executive order raising the tariffs on imported finished products after it was endorsed by the TRM committee.

Malacañang is expected to approve soon the committee's most recent recommendation.

Gov't launches electricity bourse demonstration run

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT launched last Friday the demonstration run for the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) which, a group of independent power producers said, would pave the way for a more robust local energy market.

During the launching ceremony, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said the demonstration run would last up to June when a trial market would start operation. The trial market will continue operation until a full-blown spot trading of electricity is established.

"We expect the prototype of the market management system to be delivered in March 2004. We give debugging three months before we start with the trial market," Perez said.

Representatives of independent power producers and distribution utilities witnessed a simulation of the electronic trading of electricity at the Robinsons Equitable Tower, where the WESM operator, called Philippine Electricity Market Corp. (PEMC), would be based.

Energy officials have described the WESM as similar to a stock exchange, where buyers and sellers of electricity could trade in real-time.

The Asian Development Bank had extended last year $40 million in financial assistance for the establishment of the power market. The government is awaiting the approval of a complementary loan of the same amount from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Ernesto B. Pantangco, president of the Philippine Independent Power Producers Association or Pippa, said that the establishment of the WESM was a positive development for investors.

"The WESM would make the pricing for electricity more competitive and transparent," Pantangco said.

"Pippa members, especially those with build-operate-transfer contracts with National Power Corp., will be encouraged to participate actively in this spot market," he added.

Also last week, Energy Council of the Philippines secretary general Francisco L. Viray said the establishment of the WESM was one of two positive signals that would perk up investor interest in the local energy industry.

CEMENT IMPORTATION

Gov't urged to maintain stand

AN alliance of labor organizations has expressed concerns over the alleged collusion between cement importers and foreign cement companies to pressure the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to modify the safeguard measures imposed on imported cement.

The National Confederation of Labor (NCL) said that a group of importers was closely working with foreign cement companies in Japan, Taiwan and Indonesia to compel Secretary Mar Roxas in reducing or removing the safeguard measures.

The three countries were among the country's major sources of imported cement prior to the imposition of the safeguard measures in November 2001.

"Obviously, these groups want the tariff reduced or removed so they could continue their cement importation," NCL acting secretary general Ernesto Arellano said in his letter to the trade secretary.

He said there was a potential harm to the labor sector once the tariffs were lowered prematurely and if cement imports would flood the local market anew.

"Every bag of cement imported displaces a bag of cement locally made. Every foreign cement factory that operates due to its exports to the Philippines can result in the closing of a Philippine cement factory," Arellano noted.

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Letter To CyberBay Stockholders

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

INTEGRITY OF CONTRACTS

Amari's Contract with the Public Estates Authority (PEA) was approved after two (2) failed biddings in 1991, signed in 1995 by President Fidel V. Ramos (FVR) to complete the Boulevard 2000 Master Plan, a showcase development for the Philippines.

In 1997, the Contract was renegotiated and amended with improved terms for the Government. The amended Contract was approved by FVR and approved again by President Estrada in May 1999 after being reviewed by members of the Cabinet, Senate and Congress.

The Supreme Court nullified the Contract in July 2002!!!

The nullification **TOTALLY DISREGARDED** the acts of the Executive Department and punished the private investors who relied on these Executive approvals.

The nullification puts in question the integrity of written contracts with the Government.

PROTECTIVE CLAUSES

It is common practice that contracts provide for a "Separability Clause". Should there be any provision in the agreement that contradicts certain laws or is unenforceable, that provision can be removed from the main contract to allow the contracting parties to pursue their business objectives.

The nullification **TOTALLY DISREGARDED** the Separability Clause in the Contract.

PROSPECTIVE APPLICATION

Any new doctrine of the Supreme Court should be applied to future contracts and should not affect past and present contracts.

The nullification **TOTALLY DISREGARDED** this constitutional principle.

CONTRADICTION

The May 6, 2003, majority decision states that "The Decision does not bar private corporations from participating in reclamation projects and being paid for their services in reclaiming lands".

The nullification **TOTALLY DISREGARDED** the fact that the Amari Contract is a reclamation and development contract and Amari can be paid in land OR cash for its services. THE AMARI CONTRACT IS NOT A CONTRACT TO PURCHASE RECLAIMED LAND.

OWNERSHIP AND POLITICS

Newspaper columnists commented that "CyberBay (owner of Amari) shareholders (were) caught in the crossfire in the battle over the Davide Impeachment", and that the nullification was a result of "revenge".

CyberBay Corporation is a public company with approximately 1,270 PUBLIC SHAREHOLDERS, with Prime Orion Philippines Inc. as the biggest single shareholder holding about 25% equity. Prime Orion is also a publicly listed company with more than 1,200 PUBLIC SHAREHOLDERS.

Let us not politicize a purely private endeavor. CyberBay never did and will never involve itself in politics.

UNFAIR TREATMENT?

BusinessWorld reported on November 13 that "Federal Land, a company which owns 42 hectares in the reclamation area, received notification from the Supreme Court that its decision on the Amari case would not affect it."

The Supreme Court continuously denied Amari's request to orally argue its case. Amari could prove that its Contract is legal and enforceable like all the other reclamation contracts.

TRUTH

Recent newspapers reported that the final vote of the Supreme Court in the case should be changed from 7-7 to a vote of 7-5 because two justices allegedly did not file their dissenting opinions on time.

Seven Supreme Court justices found merit to favor the reconsideration of Amari. The TRUTH and wisdom behind their dissent are not altered by procedural technicalities.

We believe that the Supreme Court is the defender of TRUTH and JUSTICE; it does not suppress the same.

CyberBay Corporation

ADVT.

The sad state of the Philippine mining industry

By Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez

COMMENTARY

THE STATE of the Philippine minerals industry is a microcosm of the state of the Philippines … a lot of potential, but misunderstood, unappreciated, viewed with suspicion, derision, and looked down upon.

In other words, a missed opportunity.

The Philippines is the second most mineralized country in the world. Up to the early '80s, the Philippines was a leader in the mining sector of the world. We were the 5th in the world. As much as 25 percent of our foreign exchange was derived from the mining industry.

Today, we are at the bottom of the heap and can barely contribute 2 percent to our foreign exchange.

In 1993, then President Fidel V. Ramos created a multisectoral task force on the minerals industry to assess the needs and lay out measures for the resuscitation of the industry.

In 1994, Republic Act (R.A.) No. 7729 that reduced the excise tax on mineral products was passed. And in 1995, R. A. No. 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act was approved. All these activities spurred a lot of interest and started the resuscitation of the minerals industry.

Pseudo environmentalist groups

However, as exploration activities were approved, some pseudo environmentalist groups, really anti-development groups camouflaging as environmental groups, began opposing these activities by taking advantage of the weakness in the process and the Local Government Code to stall projects.

The lack of information on these laws were exploited by anti-development groups that led to a misunderstanding by the uninformed local communities, clergy, media and even the national government bureaucracy.

And when R.A. No. 8371, otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, was passed, even more confusion took place and stopped any more activities as the implementing rules took time to be released and funding of the operations of the NCIP was delayed.

As a result, no new mining activities and developments started. Only existing operations were tolerated. With no new projects and mine lives ending, the mineral sector began a sharp decline.

In 1998, the DENR drafted a National Minerals Policy and started its consultation with multi-stakeholder groups including environmentalists and the industry. Yet the policy that would have reconciled the issues languished for a number of years.

Now that the Arroyo government has directed the DENR and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to institute measures to revitalize the local minerals industry, we have been hoping and waiting for positive action.

The DENR approved the simplification of the grant of mining tenements and established the Mining Assistance Center at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in partnership with the DTI and the One-Stop-Shop Committees in MGB's regional offices. It organized mining workshops and now this Conference.

The DTI, through the Board of Investments (BOI), tried to establish a roadmap for development, but has since shelved the activity, due to the many conflicting laws, regulations, orders and implementing rules. These measures and efforts, though a good start, are still flawed.

Roadblocks

When proponents tried to implement the process, many roadblocks showed, resulting in a stalemate as NGOs opposed these programs. The obstinate attitude of leftist-infiltrated NGOs with an obsolete ideology, funded from abroad, has succeeded in stopping any project utilizing the confusing and lengthy processes. Even the BOI tried and stopped.

The delays alone in the formulation of the National Minerals Policy, that has been five years in the making, is a clear example of how and why the Philippines' minerals industry has been in a long decline.

While we understand and respect the need for a process of engagement with multi-stakeholder groups, and we have actively participated in the effort, we must, however, all recognize and remember that we live in a world that has varied views and opinions and it is impossible to render a complete consensus.

Yet we keep delaying the process to try to reach one. For those who oppo[illegible] and development, the delay alone is already a victory.

It is interesting to hear that even the DENR through its corporate arm—the Natural Resources Development Corp. (NRDC), which has now finally tackled the problem of Mt. Diwalwal, is encountering difficulty and delay in the process.

If the DENR, with the full backing of the President and the government, cannot make things happen even in the light of an emergency situation, and get the cooperation of the NCIP that sits under the Office of the President so that it can build a tailings dam to stop the further degradation of the environment and halt the use of mercury, what more for us, powerless in the private sector.

Moving forward

Perhaps in the light of this situation that affects us all, we should now consider the following:

Firstly, there is a need to, once and for all, come up with a National Minerals Policy that sets the vision of the government towards mineral development. Secondly, we need a Supreme Court decision resolving the constitutionality of the Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) and the Philippine Mining Act so that investors can decide on how to go about their projects.

Thirdly, there is a need to clear up the bottlenecks in the implementation of the Local Government Code, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), the Philippine Mining Act and the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) law which drag the implementation of regulations' concerning minerals development and where several issues cannot be resolved by the executing agencies.

There is a need to create a Presidential Task Force that will take charge of resolving and monitoring the action plans that have been drawn to revitalize the industry through a reconciliation of these rules, regulations, orders and laws under the implementing guidelines of the National Minerals Policy.

And finally, there is a need to rectify the organizational aberration of the DENR and MGB, because of their conflicting mandates that have been affecting the government's management of the minerals industry.

The DENR has been the political haven of environmental groups and pseudo civil society since then President Corazon Aquino was installed in office in 1986. The DENR focuses generally on environmental issues, because they are politically popular.

Thus, the MGB tends to be more active in exercising its regulatory functions, rather than pursuing plans and programs that would promote the development of our country's mineral resources.

'Why punish us?'

The decline of the minerals industry can be closely tracked to 1986 when the National Pollution Control Commission under the Office of the President and the National Environmental Protection Council were replaced by the Environmental Management Bureau, and then organized under the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Then by virtue of E.O. No. 192 of 1987, the Ministry was reorganized to its present form. Since then, only persons viewed to be environmentalists have been appointed as Secretary.

While we greatly respect the Secretary for the many great strides she has undertaken toward protecting the environment, specially on issues of air pollution, water conservation and solid waste management, we believe a separate agency much like the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States would best suit our country's needs.

We in the industry are aware of our past. Today, we recognize the need to balance the concerns of all stakeholder groups and we are committed to the highest standards set under best practices. But we need to move on.

Don't forget, we too have children who breathe the air, drink the water and play under the sun. We recognize the need to create a better way of life for all Filipinos and not retract to an isolated society with no development, as some of the extremist groups would prefer.

We can't all send our spouses, brothers, sisters and daughters to be maids or OFWs abroad to earn the much needed dollars to pay for our needs and desire for imported goods and services.

Do we prefer to turn a blind eye to the destruction of the family environment when marriages are put at risk and now the fear of an AIDS epidemic from the OFWs? Why is that less a concern? Yet, we cheer and encourage them for our own selfish needs and desires.

How does that compare to the attacks foisted on an industry that creates economic activities in the most rural areas of our country, particularly in Mindanao, where the poorest communities live, where war rages and the richest mines exist, only to be plundered by illegal small scale miners with no measures to protect the environment and no political will exists to challenge them because of electoral votes and corruption?

Does civil society prefer that we export people rather than minerals? Does civil society choose to let unregulated mining prosper? How does government handle these issues when it can't stop illegal gambling, squatting, logging and smuggling?

We in the minerals industry are subjected to the most rigorous sets of rules and regulations, and yet we are the ones vilified. Not all of us can be in advocacy groups or work for the government. The rest of us choose to work within the legal framework to build industry, create products and services that create jobs, livelihood and a way of life we all aspire for.

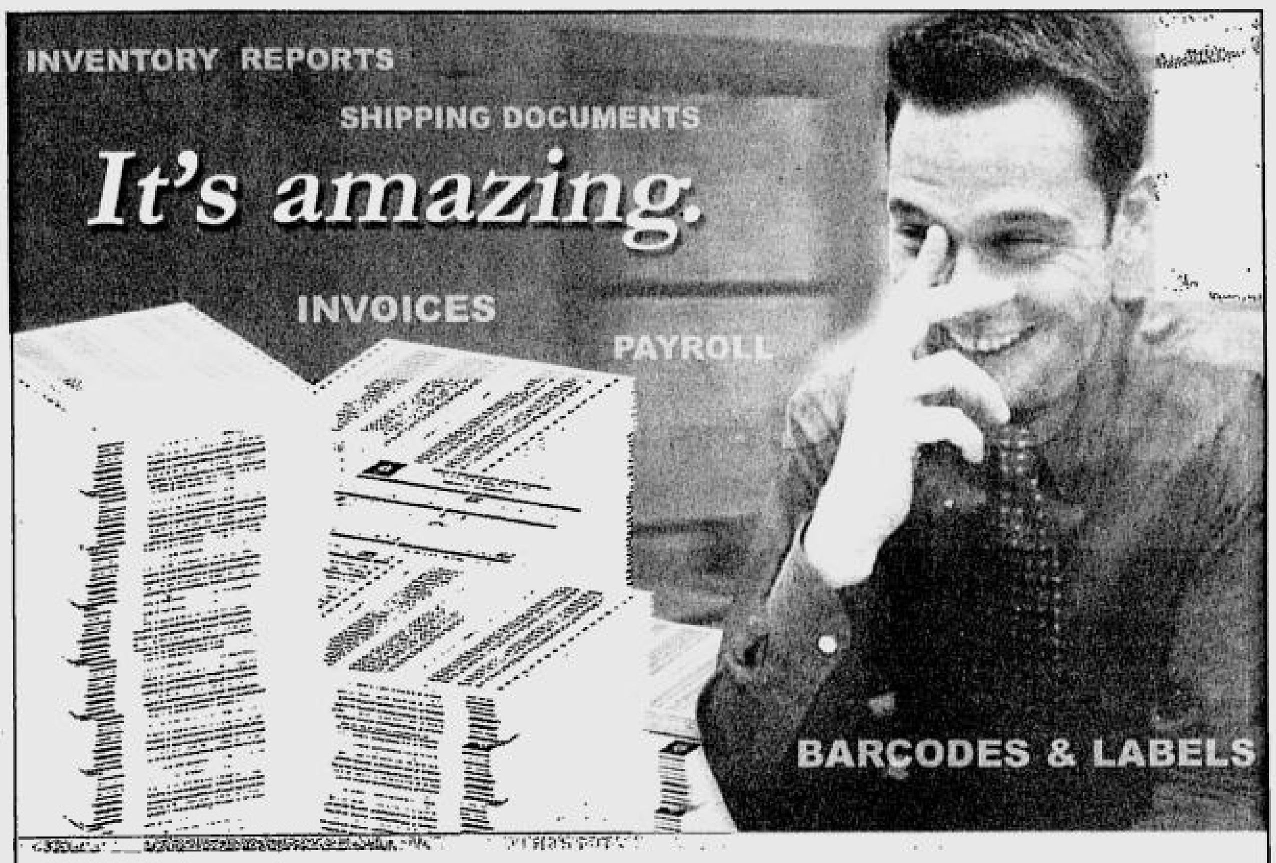
Our industry will affect at least two million Filipinos directly and indirectly, if we are given the chance to develop our country. We can help stop the provincial exodus to the already overstretched urban areas and foreign shores. We can help stop the brain drain of our society and bring some of our families back together. We have been a major pillar of our economy and our society over the years. We have learned from past mistakes and condemn any lapses. Do not hold the rest of us hostage for other peoples' misdeeds.

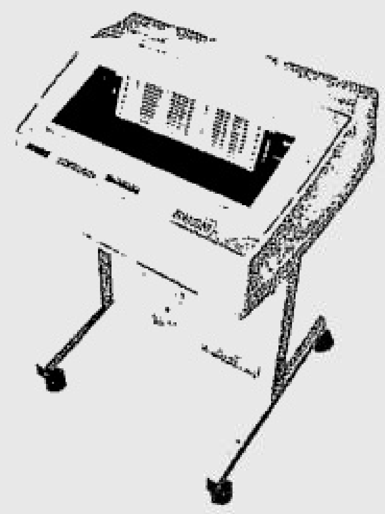
Is that fair? Why should government hold us hostage? When planes of Cebu Pacific and Laoag Air crashed, did government and civil society hold the entire airline industry hostage or the maritime industry hostage every time there is a ferry disaster? Then, why us?

Why hold us back when all the measures and regulations are there to deal with these issues? Why stop us now when all we are trying to do is help our countrymen and our country move forward. We have lost $24 billion or P1.332 trillion because of these delays.

Our country cannot afford to wait any longer. It's time to move on.

(The author is incoming president of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, director of the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association and president and CEO of Benguet Corp.)





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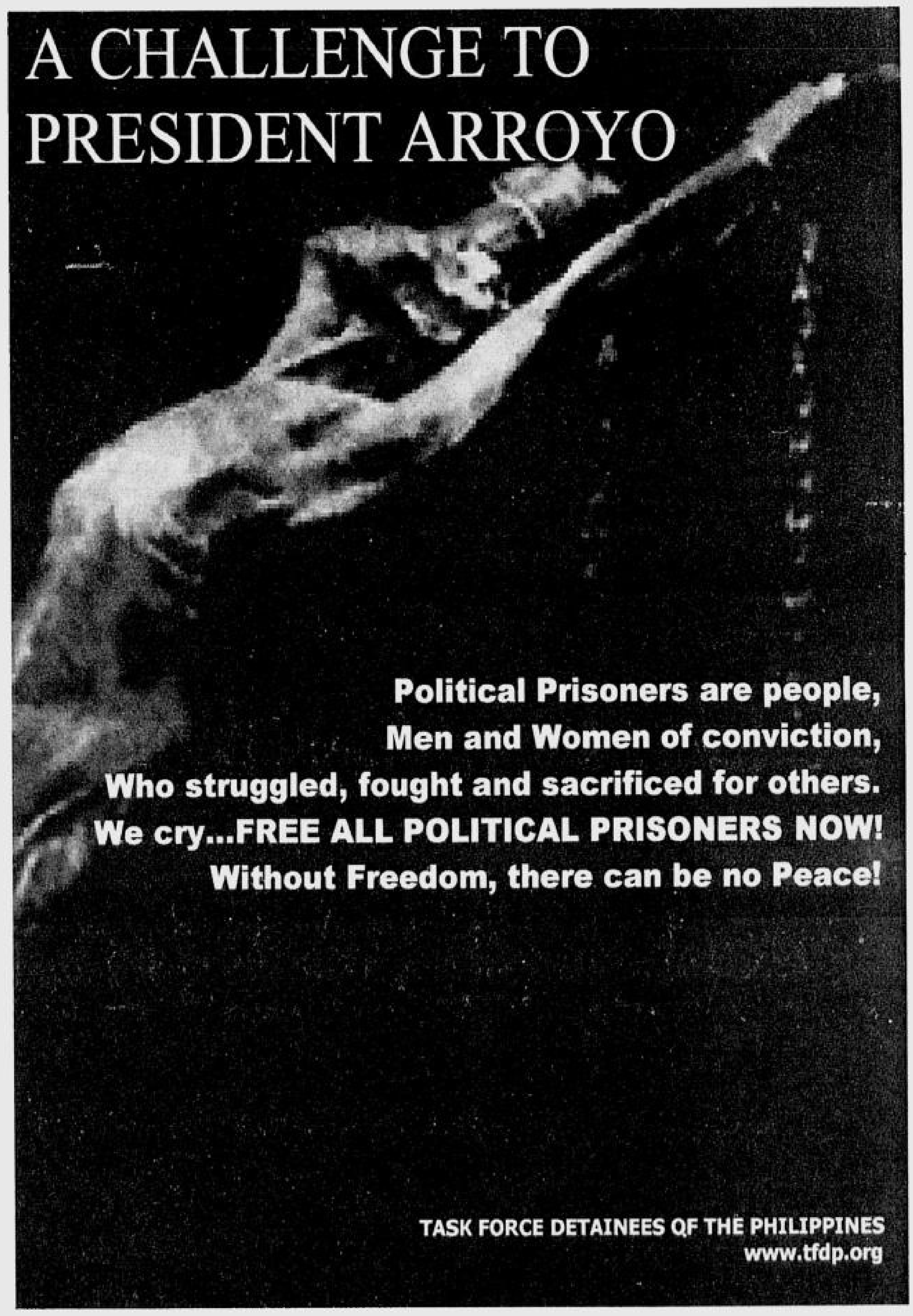
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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Emilia David Tadeo consisting of her bank account in BPI, Malabon Branch under Savings Account no. 57633374-66 was adjudicated to her surviving heir namely Justino B. David, Felicidad B. David and Eliza David-delos Reyes by means of public document executed on Nov. 21, 2003, and ratified before Atty. Dennis G. Orendain, Notary Public for and in Calamba Laguna and entered into his Notarial Registry as Doc. No. 01; Page No. 01; Book No. X; Series of 2003
PDI-Nov. 24, Dec. 1 & 8, 2003

PERSONAL

Thank You Holy Spirit
From: Enrique Del Rosario

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (THE OWNER) invites all interested bidders to apply for Eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Installation including Testing and Commissioning of Networking Equipment for PEZA Head Office.

2. **Description of Project**
   Approved Budget : P2.80 Million
   Source of Fund : PEZA

   SCOPE OF WORK
   a. Testing, reconfiguration and commissioning of 2 existing units of Cisco Router 2509.
   b. Supply, installation and testing of Structure Cables –
      - Gigabit backbone – PEZA building – 2nd to 6th floors with termination to the Network Data Center (NDC)
      - Cat5e for horizontal cables
      - Network Data Center (NDC) will use Cat6 cables
   c. Supply, installation and configuration, testing and commissioning of Edge Switches and Core Switch.
   d. Supply, installation and configuration, testing and commissioning of 3 servers running on Oracle 91 and RH Linux Platform.
   e. Provision of technical support and training to the operation of the systems and equipment.

3. Bid Documents may be secured upon presentation of BAC Certificate of Registration and payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00) from the BAC Secretariat 3/F Almeda Building Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City from 03 to 12 December 2003, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Mondays to Fridays only. The deadline for the Submission of Bids is on 06 January 2004, 10:00 am, at the Office of the Deputy Director General for Finance & Administration. Bid Opening shall be at 2:00 p.m. of the same date.

4. A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on 19 December 2003, 10:00 a.m. at the 6th Floor, PEZA Social Hall.

5. PEZA reserves the right to reject any bid or any part thereof, to waive any defect or informality therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the Applicant and/or Bidder may incur in the preparation of Eligibility Documents and of the Bids, and will entertain only such Bid/s established to be the most advantageous to the Government.

6. The IRR of RA 9184 shall govern in this bidding process.

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Dec. 1 & 8, 2003)

NOTICE TO OUR VALUED PATRONS

Due to some unforeseen events beyond our control, the PMA Class '77 "MASIKAP CHRISTMAS BONANZA" raffle draw scheduled on December 21, 2003 based on the last four digits of the first, second, and third prized of the Sweepstakes Christmas draw is postponed to February 13, 2004 (Friday) at Baguio City. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winners will be determined by drawing 4 numbers from four tambiolos corresponding to the 4-digit number of tickets.

Thank you for your support.

(Sgd.) **PSSUPT ORLANDO L PESTAÑO**
Class President, PMA Class '77

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Pls. be informed that
Jocelyn B. Crespo
is no longer connected with
NET SHIP MANAGEMENT INC.

Any transaction entered by her
in behalf of the corporation
shall not be honored.

NET SHIP MANAGEMENT INC.

(PDI–Dec. 8, 2003)

Light-A-Tree for Unity
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together with the Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) and its cause-partners
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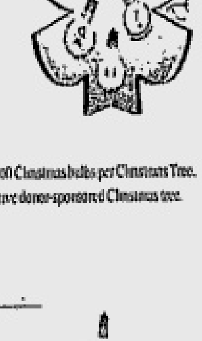
to positively project the Philippines as the *"Christmas capital of the world"*
where social good is tangibly achieved by synergistic endeavor and the *"bayanihan"* spirit.

Be part of this history-making moment
by being our *PGP Corporate Christmas Tree Donor* or *PGP Individual Christmas Bulb Donor*.
Please free to call GPM at 631.3932 or fax 633.1089 or text 0917.835.4829 or 0919.587.7949.
Look for Bhelle or Willity
Or call Advent, Inc at 687.2269 or fax 687.2559, look for Louwi or Patrick.

YES, SALI AKO! SA PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO



☐ PGP Corporate Christmas Tree Donor at PhP 150,000.00/Christmas Tree
- ○ Entitles Corporate Donor Name to be appended to one (1) Christmas tree in the *Pamaskong Galing Pilipino* display at the Luneta Park from December 16, 2003 to January 4, 2004.
- ○ Entitles Corporate Donor Name to be listed in *Pamaskong Galing Pilipino (PGP)* newspaper supplements
- ○ Entitles Corporate Donor to nominate the specific cause to which their donations will be allocated.

Corporate Name
Address
Contact Person
Contact Number
Preferred cause

☐ PGP Individual Christmas Bulb Donor at PhP 150.00/Christmas Bulb
- ○ Entitles individual donors to choose the cause they want to support. There will be approximately 300-400 Christmas bulbs per Christmas Tree.
- ○ Individual Christmas bulb donations from the network of a Corporate donor will be hung on the respective donor-sponsored Christmas tree.

Name
Address
Contact Number

☐ I will donate a total of _____ bulb/s (as indicated below) x PhP 150.00 = PhP _____

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"For God so loved the World, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life." John 3:16

Maria Luz (Bayang) Fabian vda. de Fernandez

wife of the late **Godofredo C. Fernandez**
August 15, 1917 - December 6, 2003
peacefully returned to her Creator

Her bereaved children - **Leticia, Lolita, Luisito, Wilfredo, Cecilia, Alejandro, Alfredo**, their spouses, children, grandchildren, her brother **Eduardo**, sisters **Rosario** and **Isabel** - request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at the Enriquez Funeral Homes, F. Tanedo St., Tarlac City.

Interment at the Eternal Memorial Park will follow the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac City on Tuesday, December 9.

MOISES BALDONADO RAMOS

Peacefully joined his Creator
on December 5, 2003 at the age of 86.

He is survived by his children **MARISSA & FRED**; sisters **RAFAELA AGRAVANTE & CARMEN ENRIQUEZ, ATE MARING, ONING** and other relatives.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 10, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. along with the remains of the late wife **JULIA** at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine Parish Crypt.

"Now we have faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthian 13:13

LOURDES DECENA GARILAO

Peacefully joined our Lord
on December 7, 2003 at the age of 90.

Her loving husband **Jesus**; her children **Amy, Delise** and **Net, Ernie** and **Polly, Jesy** (†); grandchildren **Mike** and **Bon Logico, Jo Ann** and **James Javier**, and **Macky** and **Jenny Logico, Nina, Kara**, and **Lizzie Garilao, Ceci** and **Carlo Francisco**; sisters-in-law, nieces & nephews & other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Parish Memorial Chapels, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, December 10, 2003
at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City,
after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26

Our Dearly Beloved

COL. RAFAEL V. JOTIE PC GSC (RET.)

Born: October 24, 1929

Peacefully joined our Lord
on December 6, 2003 at the age of 74.

His beloved mother **Juliana**; wife **Leticia**; children **Greg & Tet**; grandchildren **Jonathan & Jeremy, Niño, Joanne**; together with his brothers **Benedicto, Herman & Honesto**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Camp Mortuary of Saint Ignatius Chapel, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

CARMEN BAQUIRAN BONIFACIO

Died on 28 Nov. 2003. She was 97 years old.

She was born in Vigan, Ilocos Sur and was a long-time resident of Davao City.

Her family: **Amelia B. Bonifacio, Atty. Danilo & Erlinda B. Basa** & daughter **Ana Patricia Basa** and relatives request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

The family may be reached through:
082-296-2661 or 0917-701-80-21

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord." — 2 Corinthians 5:8

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ERRATUM

In the obituary ad of **Emilia Martin Cocal** published on December 6, 2003 in this paper, one of the children's name Elescilda should have been **Blescilda**.

Our apologies.

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Republic of the Philippines
CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Clark Development Corporation (CDC) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested suppliers for the hereunder listed project:

"SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE LICENSES FOR CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S LEASE-TO-OWN PROJECT"

The project includes supply, delivery and installation of 189 branded and brand new desktop computers, 10 branded and brand new laptop computers bundled with Windows XP Pro OEM and MS Office XP (SBE) OEM software licenses, including the provision of maintenance, warranties, and technical support and after-sales services for a period of three (3) years.

The bidding activity will be governed by Republic Act 9184 and its implementing rules on the eligibility checking and evaluation of bids using the non-discretionary pass/fail criteria.

Issuance of the Bidding Documents will be on December 8 to 23, 2003 (9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) at BAC Secretariat, 3rd Floor, Bldg. 2127 upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php 10,000.00.

The approved budget of the contract to be bid is **Php 14,466,125.00**.

Pre-bid conference will be on January 7, 2004, 2:00 p.m. at the OTS Conference Room, Bldg. 2125, CDC Corporate Offices, E. Quirino St., Clark Field, Pampanga.

CDC reserves the right to reject any or all applications on all bids without offering any reason, waive any formality, informality and/or defect and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government, nor does CDC guarantee that an award will be made.

Submission and opening of bids shall be on January 22, 2004, 2:00 p.m. at OTS Conference Room, Bldg. 2125, CDC Corporate Offices, E. Quirino St., Clark Field, Pampanga.

All inquiries and letters shall be addressed to:

The BAC Secretariat
Clark Development Corporation
3rd Floor, Bldg. 2127, E. Quirino Avenue,
Clark Field, Pampanga
Telefax: (45) 599-9000 local 542

(Sgd.) **ROMEO N. DYOCO, JR.**
Chairman
Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - Dec. 8 & 15, 2003)

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

(Reinsurance for NAPOCOR/PSALM/TRANSCO'S Industrial All-Risks Insurance Policy)

In view of the failure of the first bidding held on November 24, 2003, for this purpose, the DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding Committee (JBC), thru its Eligibility and Evaluation Group (EEG) is inviting qualified local and foreign reinsurance companies/brokers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the renewal of reinsurance for the National Power Corporation's Industrial All Risks Insurance Policy, with an indicative budget of US$12.0 Million – US$14.7 Million, all inclusive, for the period 12:00 noon of January 31, 2004 to 12:00 noon of January 31, 2005.

	SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES
Issuance of Eligibility And Bidding Documents	December 16,2003- January 5, 2004 9:00 AM-5:00 PM JBC Secretariat 7th Floor, EDPC Bldg. BSP Complex Roxas Blvd., Manila
Pre-Bid Conference	December 22, 2003, 9:00 AM Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Manila
Submission and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Envelopes	January 6, 2004, 2:00 pm. Office of the Chairman Board Rm., 6th Floor DOF Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Manila

For applicant-foreign reinsurers and applicant-brokers with foreign lead reinsurers, the foreign reinsurer must have a credit rating of at least "A" from a reputable rating agency as of June 2003, and certify that it will provide a lead line of at least 20% of the reinsured risk. Domestic and foreign lead reinsurers must have a net worth of at least Php2.0 Billion as of December 31, 2002.

Eligibility and bid documents shall be issued to new applicants upon filing of a Letter of Intent to Apply and payment of a non-refundable fee of US$500.00 to the National Power Corporation.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bid, sufficiency of Bid Security, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract governed by the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.

The JBC and the EEG reserve the right to reject any and all bids or Letters of Intent, waive any defect therein and accept the offer which it deems responsive and most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. PORFIRIO B. VILLENA JR.**
Director IV, PDMSG
Presiding Officer, Eligibility and Evaluation Group
DOF-NPC-GSIS Joint Bidding Committee

Inquirer—Dec. 7, 8, 13 &14, 2003

InfoTech

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Leo Magno**

Rules on '.ph' domain name out soon

By Abigail L. Ho

THE RULES governing the country's ".ph" country-code domain is likely to come out in the next couple of weeks, in time for the first public hearing on the rules set for Dec. 17.

National Telecommunications Commission common carrier authorization department head Edgardo Cabarios said in an interview that the public hearing could not take place sooner as the advisory board tasked to draft the new rules still had to conduct more meetings.

The advisory board first met in mid-November to discuss how best to regulate the country's sovereign Internet domain. It had met two more times after that, with another meeting scheduled today.

"We hope to have the draft guidelines ready within the month. If not, we may have to wait until next year to have the public hearing," Cabarios had earlier said.

A Sept. 2 memorandum from Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo led to the formation of the advisory board on ".ph" issues, with the NTC serving in an oversight capacity.

The memorandum stemmed from complaints by Internet service providers that registration and policy-making for the ".ph" domain were monopolized by former Silicon Valley employee Jose Emmanuel Disini.

The ".ph" domain is the Internet code assigned to represent the Philippines. In effect, agencies that wish to be identified with the country attaches this domain code to its universal resource locator (URL) or web address.

For years, Disini has been managing the ".ph" domain. As the only one managing the country's domain registry, he is the registry, registrar and the policy-maker all rolled into one.

Because of this, local ISPs brought this issue up with the government, seeking clear-cut rules that would regulate the domain registry to prevent a seeming monopoly.

IT EXECUTIVE SAYS

Tech not the issue with national ID

By Leo Magno

THE IMPLEMENTATION of new technology is not the bone of contention in the creation of a national identification card system in the Philippines, according to an information technology executive whose company has spearheaded similar national ID programs in Asia.

Chou Fang Soong, Southeast Asia president of Gemplus Technologies, said most societies already implement various identification card systems in financial transactions and government functions. This, he said, would only be made more efficient by having a national ID card where the citizen can control the information he or she wishes to make public for each transaction.

CHOU

"In the Philippines like in other countries, if you take out of the system your driver's licenses, social security cards, passports and other similar forms of ID, you would cease to function as a citizen," Chou said.

"Today, we show our ID cards with our pictures on it—we are already doing that. However, these are more prone to forgery. Police identification can be faked. Passports can be forged. Having your identification information in smart cards is actually harder to forge than traditional IDs," Chou said.

Smart microprocessor cards are the small, often gold, integrated circuit modules on plastic cards found on credit cards, office identity cards and even the subscriber identity module (SIM) cards found in cellular phones. Aside from financial and telecom transactions, one of the biggest markets for smart cards today is their use in ID cards.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is strongly pushing for a national ID, and has asked Congress to prioritize the passage of the National ID System Act. The Philippine National Police is also endorsing the idea in their effort to curb criminality, terrorism and the recent rash of kidnap incidents.

However, labor and militant leaders believe such an ID could be used by government to invade the social, economic and political life of any person. They branded it a plot to kill human rights and the civil liberties of Filipinos instead of being used as a weapon against terrorism and crime. The militant leaders are also threatening to go back to the streets to protest the "repressive" measure.

This is not the first time that the national ID has become a national controversy. In 1998, civil society groups marched on the streets to junk the national ID plan of former President Fidel V. Ramos, whose ID plan was eventually shot down by the Supreme Court.

Gemplus' Chou, however, believes the issue is not technological but political.

"Sometimes it's better to have a monolithic organization to decide and fund it (the national ID system). In some countries, they just allocated budget for it and then implemented it, like in Malaysia," Chou said.

Gemplus was part of a group which established Malaysia's national ID system, and is in the process of setting up Hong Kong and Taiwan's so-called "citizen cards." Chou said Thailand, India and Vietnam are also in the process of creating their own "eCitizen cards."

In the Philippines, Gemplus teamed up with Digiline and MegaData to deliver a smart-card based clearance program for the National Bureau of Investigation. The goal is to minimize identity fraud and speed up the processing of NBI clearance using kiosks where cardholders can just swipe their smart cards instead of filling up forms and falling in line. Gemplus officials admitted, however, that uptake of the solution has been slow and so far only two kiosks are being used. Gemplus is also undertaking a similar project for the Bureau of Immigration for overseas workers and to monitor the entry of illegal aliens and those on the bureau's watchlist.

Gemplus also supplies a bulk of the SIM cards for local mobile operators such as Globe Telecom and Smart Communications, as well as the manufacture of Visa and Mastercard credit cards.

Regarding the security of national ID systems, Chou said certain information can be volunteered by cardholders.

"The system can prompt you if you want to reveal that data, depending on the transaction, and you will always have your PIN," he said. "At the end of the day, the users are the ones who still control their data."

Regarding network security and the threat of cyberattacks on the network, Chou admitted that anyone on the Internet today is always at risk of being invaded, but was also quick to point out that global conspiracies of data gathering for the purpose of manipulation by governments or huge corporations is a paranoid delusion.

"If you store data on a PC and your PC is on the network, you're always at risk. But if you store data on a smart card, no one can access your data unless you give them your card and your PIN. The smart card is the domain where the user has control. Understanding the technology will help people accept the idea of national ID cards," he said.

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Per DTI NCR No. 5090, Series of 2003.

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MANPOWER, MATERIALS, MACHINERY

What to do when profit margins drop

By Myrna R. Co
Contributor
UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries

GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

WHEN your sales volume is more or less stable and yet your gross profit margins steadily decline, what do you do?

If you are tempted to raise your prices to make up for lost income, hold it. Take time to look at your production costs.

Declining margins may be traced to high prices of materials and labor, high rate of wastage, pilferage of materials, high cost of labor and low productivity of manpower.

Manufacturers wishing to plug leaks in manufacturing expenditures should look into purchasing policies, inventory control and labor productivity and from there adopt a cost reduction strategy.

It is not that easy to know which operational aspects are inefficient and wasteful. It would take a closer study to accurately identify cost culprits in your workplace. However, you may be able to pick up an idea or two from the following checklist, categorized into the major cost areas: manpower, materials, machinery and methods.

Manpower

1. Determine which sections in the plant have the highest frequency of absences and overtime work. Institute controls and practices to minimize these.
2. Instruct foremen to periodically rate and rank their men. Make them responsible for rating based on productivity and potential, not favoritism.
3. Create daily and weekly schedules for all tasks. Reschedule and reroute production to avoid paying premiums for night work.
4. Inform each employee of his or her role in the company and the importance of respective jobs to the final product.
5. Make job performance evaluation personal to each employee. Cite strong points and help overcome weak ones. Boost employees' confidence in themselves by giving them a say in setting their own performance goals.
6. Review the organization chart for clarity and simplicity. Neither overload nor overburden individuals. Consider job generalization to attain a more flexible workforce which can be put to full utilization.
7. Upgrade training of service workers: teach them the use, technique and care of equipment.
8. Keep permanent workers stable. For peak periods, use a manpower leasing agency or hire additional workers on a contractual basis.

Materials

1. Get each foreman to forecast his specific material needs for the next quarter. Review results.
2. Inspect the material scrap file. Select the most frequently recurring items and get workers to shoot for a 5 percent conservation program.
3. Whenever possible, avail of price discounts offered by suppliers by buying materials in bulk.
4. Put your next scrap materials sale on a competitive bid basis instead of accepting the going rate for it.
5. Order your bulk materials in job lot packages that can be meted out directly to operating groups without opening or counting.
6. Review inactive materials inventory. Eliminate or find substitutes for high cost, slow moving items whenever possible.
7. Determine the possibility of getting some of your suppliers to furnish 15 percent of your incoming material purchases on consignment. You will find that this will cut inventory and loosen up some tied-up cash.
8. Keep materials for future orders out of your inventory. Postpone or stretch out deliveries and cancel those that tend to swell your stock.
9. Try matching your material supplies with your sales volume, especially if this volume is slipping. Otherwise, you're bound to build up a big inventory.
10. Run a "make-or-buy" cost comparison on your biggest manufacturing component item.
11. Measure material costs in terms of overall production expenses. If it yields a factor bigger than 10 percent, you need a formal material utilization program.
12. Conserve precious plant storage warehousing space by using rigid stocking racks for coil or bar stock.

WHAT/ B2-2

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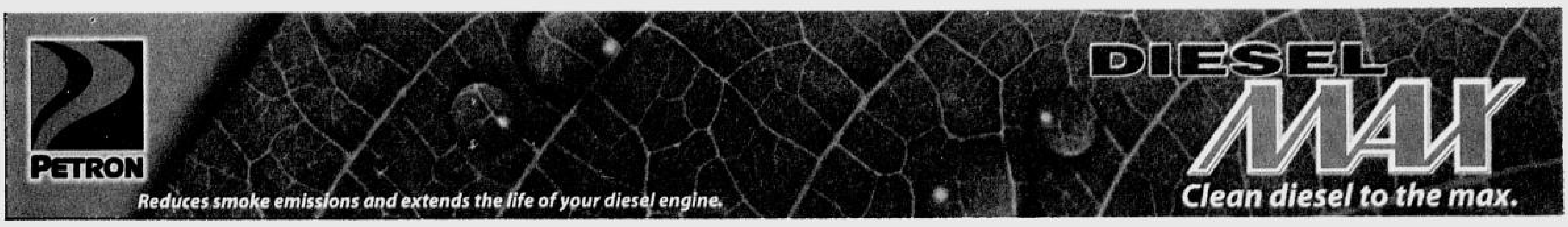

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Within ARMM's Reach

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Mario Antonio G. Lopez

THE MANAGEMENT Educators' Workshop (MEW) Work Group recently completed another variant of the offerings that the Management Scholarship & Development Committee (MSDC) of the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP) has been offering to management schools throughout the country since 1992.

Since 1996, the MEW Work Group has been offering not only the regular MEW which is designed primarily to improve teacher effectiveness by upgrading course content and teaching methodologies.

This latest variant of the MEW (an earlier variant is called the Seminars for Management Educators, SME) was developed by the MAP and the Asian Institute of Management, in consultation with the Notre Dame University (NDU) of Cotabato City.

NDU is one of the better known universities in Mindanao and arguably one of the most prestigious in ARMM (Cotabato City is technically not a part of ARMM but is surrounded by it). This variant is the Executive Management Training Program (EMTP).

Why another variant?

The design of the MEW bore very definite conditions in mind. The first schools targeted were those located in our larger, and perceivably more modern, cities in relatively prosperous regions—Manila, Baguio, Davao and Cagayan de Oro, and their environs.

These cities have branches, offices and outlets of multinational companies and large national businesses, government agencies and civil society organizations.

The business executives, senior government bureaucrats and civil society organizers in these cities have not simply heard of the more recent management practices, concepts, frameworks and tools. Many organizations either have implemented the more basic steps of these in their operations or are planning to do so.

The faculty of the schools in these cities are equally aware of the developments in organizational and managerial practices because they are among the first exposed to these. Many of their managers or officials teach in these schools part-time. They share their knowledge with their full-time colleagues, many of whom are organizational consultants also.

Cotabato City presented the MAP-AIM team with a different challenge. There the businesses are small, mostly (overwhelmingly!) family owned, local in orientation and manage their organizations in traditional ways. The government offices (mainly ARMM) present are new and subject to constant turnover.

While several schools have been constantly updating their course content, there seems little impetus for continuous improvement because the market itself does not seem to value these improvements.

Cotabato City and its environs' most prevalent organizations and offices (and their owners, executives and managers) needed exposure to global trends and the impact these would have on them if they remained where they are.

The new variant (the EMTP) provided the business, government and civil society organizations (including the academics and the school administrators) a good look at the state-of-the-practice of management and leadership so they could compare themselves and see how far they are from the leaders. The team came prepared to help them identify opportunities for leaping into the future.

Sixty-six participants attended the course. Thirty-six came from four schools (including schools from Marbel, Midsayap and Tacurong) and 30 came from business (including the local power company), government (including the water district office) and civil society.

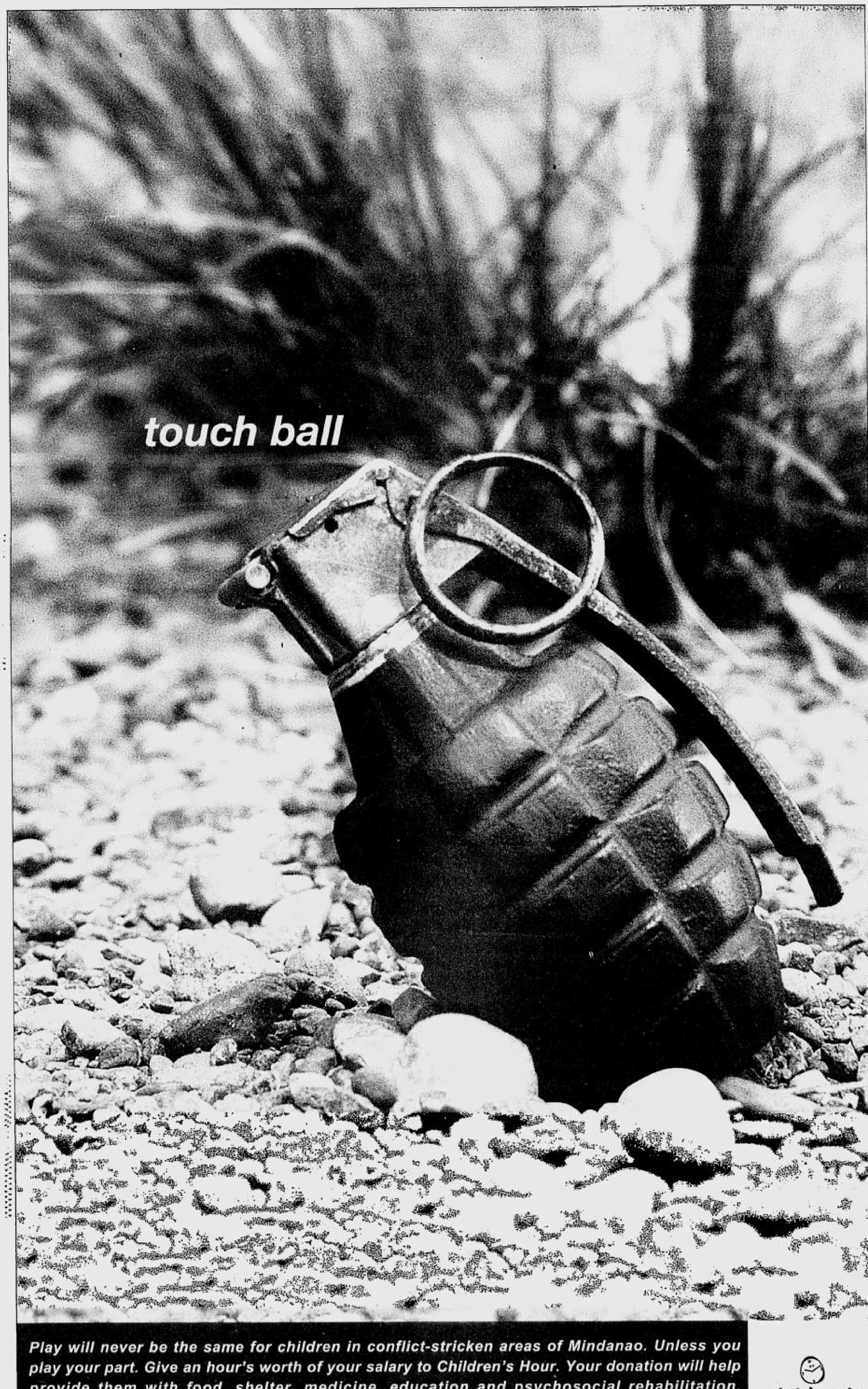
Five members of the Work Group should have delivered the program. Very bad local weather caused last minute flight cancellations so Olive Limpe-Aw and Helen Macasaet, eager as they were, could not come.

They would have covered emerging human resources, marketing and information technology imperatives for globally competitive firms. (This also meant missing the delicious local cuisine made from the freshest ingredients. And so it was, too, with shopping at the barter trade market for batik and ikat wear as well as shawls, scarves and Afghan and Indonesian caps and native jewelry.)

To the three who made it—Benny Quiblat, Nic Poblador and Mayo Lopez—fell the task of covering all the topics laid out for the program.

These included the current trends in technology convergence and how cities need not go through the trodden path to at-

WITHIN/ B2-7



Play will never be the same for children in conflict-stricken areas of Mindanao. Unless you play your part. Give an hour's worth of your salary to Children's Hour. Your donation will help provide them with food, shelter, medicine, education and psychosocial rehabilitation. And hopefully, restore part of the childhood they've lost.

Contact Children's Hour: 10/F BPI Bldg. 6768 Ayala Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City; Telephone: 894-1663/Telefax: 893-2236; or visit www.childrenshour.org.ph. Adspace courtesy of Philippine Daily Inquirer.

children's hour
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What to do . . .

From page B2-1

Machinery

1. Find out which of your machines has an output directly proportional to motor speed, yet must be driven by an AC, induction single-speed motor. Replace induction motors of the same size and horsepower. You will get about 5 percent more output without changing sheaves or belts or overspeeding two machines.

2. Don't wait for funds to buy industrial grade automatic control or mechanization equipment. Use low-priced home appliances. For example, any electric can opener makes a good high torque drive. Home electric ovens and roasters will stand several months of industrial duty. Other useful devices are tank type vacuum cleaners, corn poppers, hair dryers and heat lamps.

3. Install foot or knee-operated control spots where employees' hands are used for pushing buttons or turning valves. These cheap gadgets allow workers to use hands for skilled tasks.

4. If you are assembling pipings or fittings by pipe wrench, cut the time by 99 percent by using an air or electric impact tool with proper adaptor.

Methods

1. Visit a nearby progressive plant to compare production methods and pace with yours. Comparison stimulates cost reduction ideas.

2. Try using low-priced aerosol containers to dispense small quantities of paint or lubricant on the production line and on your quick maintenance jobs.

3. On small lot production, use "kit" materials to prevent operator errors and assembly line parts shortages. A kit, prepared at the storeroom, contains all necessary parts to complete an assembly.

4. Investigate the use of multi-purpose or double-ended work bench to save on operator time. Or mount tools on spring suspension devices to get them nearer the workplace.

5. Re-examine your stock of old dies. Surely, a number can be modified to do new jobs.

6. Modify jigs and fixtures for multiple uses.

7. Employ point-of-use storage to eliminate the need for a receiving warehouse and automatically hold down inventory.

8. Place the bulk of inspection in the first 2 percent of the process, since 80 percent of defect generation occurs there.

9. Rent space in a public warehouse for short-span, high-peak inventory accumulation rather than build a new one.

10. Set up low-cost improvements in working conditions at the plant and watch productivity jump.

("Growing Your Business" is a weekly series for forward-looking small enterprises that need guidance in their expansion and growth stages. It is a service to the SME community by the UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries.)

Check out the following UP ISSI training programs for the first quarter of 2004: Manager's Course, Effective Business Communication, Accounting for Non-Accountants, Franchising course, Start Your Own Business, Productivity thru Effective Supervision. Call Tel. 928-7076 to 79 or e-mail info.issi@up.edu.ph.)

MOVEMENT

1st batch of ICD fellows and associates named

THE INSTITUTE of Corporate Directors (ICD), headed by its President Jesus P. Estanislao, bared its first batch of Fellows and Associates during the 9th Conference Series on Good Governance and Responsible Citizenship.

Some 70 associates have been named by ICD. Associates are those who have undergone orientation courses on governance and responsible citizenship and may proceed with other courses and modules leading to Fellowship under the certification program of the Institute. ICD Executive Director Jonathan Juan Moreno said "the Philippines is the first country to launch an Accreditation Program for reputational agents i.e, the professions, whose high standards of professional and ethical practice, have significant impact on improved corporate governance."

The professional groups included are: Internal and External Auditors, Accountants and Chartered Financial Analysts, and Media and Communication Specialists focused on business and economics. Eventually, judges in specialized courts as well as corporate secretaries will be invited to this program.

The Founding Fellows of ICD are Estanislao (ICD president and CEO), PSR Consulting Principal Cesar Saldana, Trust International Paper Corporation

1ST/ B2-7

RP insurers must check solvency of global reinsurers

By Reynaldo A. de Dios
Contributor

THE PHILIPPINE insurance industry should take note of the current situation in the global reinsurance market place.

In the recently concluded European Insurance Summit held in Brussels which was organized by Handelsblatt in cooperation with the Wall Street Journal Europe, there was considerable focus on the financial status of the global insurance and reinsurance companies.

The general consensus was that it was in a state of volatility due to unprecedented and increasing loss trends worldwide. Principal causes for this disturbing scenario were the disasters in New York of Sept. 11, 2001, the floods in Central Europe, earthquakes and typhoons in Asia and Turkey, the bush fires in California and Australia, corporate misgovernance and scandals, uncollateralized surety/guarantee bonds and adverse court awards in liability cases.

Aggravating the predicament further was the global fall in stock market values, low interest levels and under-pricing of premium rates to risks all of which impacted on the net worth of the global insurance industry thus reducing sharply their underwriting capacity.

In consequence of these developments, the excess capital and reserves of the global reinsurance industry have evaporated resulting in the disappearance of over $200 billion of reinsurance capacity although there was an inflow of new capital of $53 billion, $30 billion in Bermuda and $23 billion in Lloyd's which is still insufficient for the industry needs.

With the continuity of depressed equity markets not to mention the new scandals in the mutual fund industry and declining investment returns, the solvency of a good number of insurers and reinsurers have come under greater scrutiny by the regulatory bodies.

Rating agencies like Standard & Poor's, AM Best and Moody's have downgraded almost half of the top reinsurers since January 2002 which included world renowned reinsurance companies in Europe. Since 1980, over 24 reinsurance companies have defaulted on their commitments and become bankrupt because of insufficient capital, poor underwriting management, catastrophe losses and fraud.

In the light of the foregoing, Philippine insurers are advised to check directly or through reputable reinsurance brokers on the capability and reliability of the global reinsurers participating in their reinsurance treaty/contracts which normally are renewed before the end of the year.

The Philippine insurance industry depends to a great extent on reinsurance protection from the global markets especially on the high-value industrial, commercial and life risks. Thus, the vital role of sound reinsurance merits the priority attention of the Philippine insurance industry. *(Risk and insurance management consultant)*

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DAILY NEWS

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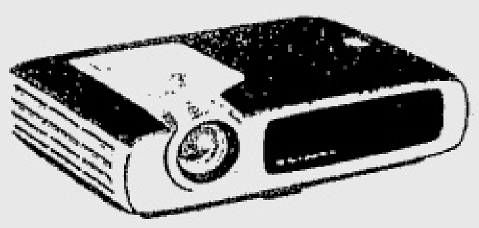

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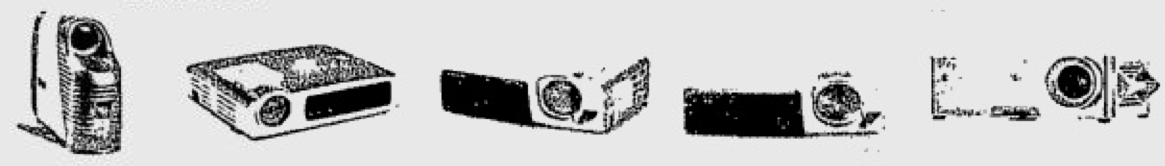

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Scholarships for the forgotten sectors

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

THANKS to a special program, children of lepers, peasants and jeepney drivers are now getting Master's and PhD degrees.

It's called the International Fellowships Program (IFP) of the Ford Foundation. It allows exceptional people from the "marginalized sectors" to pursue graduate studies.

Here are three success stories, food for thought for those investing in human capital.

Destroyer of leprosy

The parents of Arturo Cunanan Jr. were lepers from the Culion colony in Palawan. His father had no stable job, so his mother supported the family of nine by doing dressmaking work. Arturo graduated as the salutatorian of the St. Ignatius Academy, a Jesuit missionary school there.

He later took up BS Medical Technology at the University of Santo Tomas and was a university scholar. Arturo proved to be a consistent Dean's lister and graduated cum laude in 1979.

"It was my silent dream and ambition to be a doctor someday, to return to my home place in Culion, and be able to help control leprosy," said Arturo.

He got help from the Culion Foundation and was able to take up medicine. The son of lepers became a full-fledged doctor in 1985. Then he took post-graduate studies, specializing in the field of leprosy.

Arturo returned to Culion and became a resident physician in the sanitarium. He eventually reorganized the Leprosy Control and Rehabilitation Program. In 1986, he immediately implemented the modern treatment for leprosy called Multiple Drug Therapy or MDT.

MDT was so successful that it eliminated leprosy as a public health problem in the island.

"To date there are only two active patients needing treatment, compared to more than 600 active patients when I started the program in 1986," said the doctor.

Arturo pursued further studies and got a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of the Philippines, graduating with honors. On his return to Culion, he helped out in other civic work like building farm to market roads, public schools, and water systems. He set up control programs for malaria and tuberculosis.

Arturo used his Ford fellowship to pursue a master's degree in development management at the Asian Institute of Management.

Peace advocate

Alih Sakaluran Aiyub of Zamboanga City was not your typical working student. Employed at the barter trade center, he pursued his studies in Western Mindanao State University. He spent his college years working for peace between Muslims and Christians: he served in the Interfaith Commission for Justice and Peace.

Having a degree in Mass Communications, Aiyub immersed himself in the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, going on medical and relief missions. He would often be invited to speak as a resource person for peace campaigns, and that brought him to other countries.

Aiyub founded, together with others, the Salam Peace Foundation, a Muslim-Christian movement for peace education. The peace advocate is a member of the secretariat of the Bishops-Ulama Forum in Zamboanga City and Basilan. He is also a board member of the Katilingban para sa Kalambuan, an NGO involved with Zamboanga City's urban poor.

The activist went on to teach at the Western Mindanao State University. Today, supported by the Ford Foundation, he is working on his Master's degree in Community Development in UP Diliman.

Guardian of the environment

Yasmin Arquiza of Palawan stands out in the arena of environmental reporting. Working for the Associated Press, she was once assigned to do some Palawan environmental stories. "That became the turning point of my life," she said after her visit to the St. Paul Subterranean River national park.

Arquiza then left Associated Press and went full-time writing on environmental concerns. In 1989 she founded the Earth Station Writers' and Artists Collective. Her articles were carried by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Reuters, the Far Eastern Economic Review and Asiaweek.

She became a Fellow of the watchdog Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and wrote exposés.

Arquiza moved to Palawan in 1993 and set up an environmental magazine named Bandillo ng Palawan. The publication has garnered three national awards for environmental reporting.

The nature advocate ventured into book writing. She is the co-author, with Dr. Alan White, of the celebrated volume, "Tales from Tubbataha."

Arquiza is the seventh of a Davao family of 11 children. She got by on scholarships and began writing for the Philippine Collegian, the student paper of the University of the Philippines. Through the Ford Foundation's fellowships program, she took up her Master's in Development Management at the Asian Institute of Management.

Application forms

The Ford International Fellowship Program targets those denied such education because of geographic isolation, family poverty, ethnic discrimination, physical disability, gender, or other factors. The fellowship covers tuition, travel, living allowances, and health insurance.

Applications are available at the Philippine Social Science Center, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. The phone number is 922-9630. For more information, and to look up the provincial offices, see www.ifp-phil.net. The deadline for submission of applications is on Jan. 30, 2004. *Comments to darroyo@philonline.com*

BSP GOVERNOR WINS STARS OF ASIA AWARD
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura was recently selected by BusinessWeek magazine as one of 25 leaders at the forefront of change in Asia. He gained recognition for having "kept economic discipline intact" at a time when the Philippines was undergoing political and peace and order troubles. He was the only Filipino among the awardees. Photo shows Buenaventura with former US President Bill Clinton, the guest speaker during the awarding ceremonies.

Ayalas try to sell more units at One Roxas

AYALA Land has adopted a flexible, five-year, interest-free financing scheme that allows purchasers to buy units at One Roxas Triangle.

The premiere property developer has been receiving positive reception to this move, and has sold a considerable number of units based on this scheme.

ALI recently held a cocktail party to attract prospective homebuyers and attended by the firm's top officials.

The potential buyers were introduced firsthand to the premium amenities of the luxurious residential condominium property.

Situated on a 1.2-hectare prime property at Roxas Triangle in Makati City, bounded by Paseo de Roxas and Makati Avenues, One Roxas Triangle consists of 182 units. It has designs that appeal to modern-day, urban sensibilities with exquisite aesthetic details such as floors lined with Brazilian cherry planks, kitchen and bathroom counter tops made of granite, top of the line bathroom fixtures, and designer kitchen cabinets.

There are only four units per floor, which enable the residents to take advantage of the privacy of a wing each. This focus on tranquility extends throughout the place, as a similarly luxurious lobby, a landscaped entry court, comfortable pavilions, lush lawns, and a lagoon-type swimming pool with an adjacent whirlpool afford the discerning resident a ruminative pause from the faster-paced demands of city life.

Interested in owning a unit? Call 848-5000 or email ayalasales@ayalaland.com.ph. You may also visit www.ayalaland.com.ph.

(FROM left) Ariston Estrada, former president of ORT Board of Condo Corp.; Joe Orosa and Tristan dela Rosa, Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) senior vice president and head of sales and marketing services group

CESAR Virtuslo; Ofie Paruñgao, One Roxas Triangle (ORT) director for sales; Anton P. Jacomina III; Tristan dela Rosa, Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) senior vice president and head of sales and marketing services group and Ariston Estrada, former president of ORT board of Condo Corp.

Chatting with the depositors' insurer

By Elena R. Torrijos

CALLED back from retirement nine months ago to take the helm of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. where he previously spent several years as executive vice president, Ricardo Tan has since started the ball rolling on ambitious plans to keep officers and personnel on their toes.

The PDIC president and chief executive officer, an avid rifleman during his schooldays, is aiming to transform the staid institution into a responsive, efficient and dynamic corporation that can rival top companies in the private sector.

In a far-reaching reorganization of PDIC, he has hired new key senior executives and shaken many middle managers out of complacency through a series of musical chairs.

"I want to wake people up, gently but firmly," Tan declares.

Fed up with having to sign for routinary requests, even small disbursements, Tan wants to give more power and responsibility to his people by flattening the organization.

He intends to find out the extent of delegation and devolution that can be implemented without exposing his people to too much liability.

"We cannot have the president and CEO keep most of the powers. I am signing too many routinary things. I am signing sometimes disbursements for P416. It's wasting my time, it's wasting my time," Tan laments.

Tan is himself no stranger to bureaucracy. Prior to his stint as EVP at PDIC in 1997, he worked 24 years with the Asian Development Bank in various positions, the last one as deputy director of programs department for region west.

After earning a BS in Economics and Master of Science in Economics from the University of San Francisco and the London School of Economics, respectively, Tan began his professional career as senior economist of the Central Bank.

He then spent three years in the Office of the President as presidential staff assistant in charge of economic affairs and, another two years with the Central Bank as financial attache in Londonand then four years at the Yuchengco family's Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. before joining the ADB.

At 66, Tan is very keen to come up and execute a radical, fresh look at the way PDIC operates.

PDIC, for example, has been sitting on P30 billion in investments in government securities and, to manage manage the portfolio, requires only a simple check of the maturity schedule.

"Suppose we put P4 billion to P5 billion to be a market player in government securities ... so can we have turnover income to supplement the investments? Should it not be our obligation to maximize it to the extent possible with little risk? I've asked them (PDIC finance staff) to study this very carefully," Tan says.

State-controlled Social Security System embarked on such a program last year with an allocation of P1.5 billion and made over P500 million in one year, he points out.

On how the PDIC can also meet its other mandate of fostering stability in the banking system, he called on his people to originate ideas on establishing a program that will help take out billions of non-performing assets—bad loans and foreclosed or acquired property—of troubled banks.

Despite the enactment of the Special Purpose Vehicle Act earlier this year, no bank has yet entered into a major transaction eligible for tax and other incentives provided by the law because of the large losses banks will have to book if they agree to sell the NPAs at the 15 percent to 25 percent price range quoted by foreign investment firms.

The bad assets, however, have dragged down the profitability of banks and constrained lending that is seen as key in bolstering the country's economic growth.

"We have certain powers which the other entities do not have and we're trying to conceptualize very hard on how we can contribute to the reduction of NPAs in the banking system with some funding arrangements with BSP," Tan discloses.

No concrete scheme has been drawn up yet but Tan says among the ideas being bounced around include PDIC providing cash up to 80 percent of the value of NPAs to be sold by a bank.

"We give them the money to get income support (for the NPAs) and they assign us government securities and we pay back BSP," Tan says. Eventually, PDIC will be repaid by the bank as well.

For Tan, his most important objective is to reduce the length of time it takes to settle deposit claims to five days. It used to be 60 days but he has already seen it cut to 30 days.

"My idea is really we are a public entity but we are servicing primarily the private sector so our reaction time must be ala private sector. We have to organize ourselves in such a way that we will be able to respond to our mandate quickly and efficiently," he says.

He cites the need for an information technology chief and a good management information system. He wants to strengthen PDIC's middle management, draw up modules for each department and upgrade management skills with more training. He has recently formed what he calls the "vetsin" group, officially the Management Services Group, headed by a chief for economic planning.

Since PDIC has been unfettered from the chains of the salary standardization law, Tan says he has no compunction now in asking his people for excellence.

"I tell them, look we have endeavored to give you increasing benefits out of this reorganization, a good number of officers in fact have benefited with top-paying positions. I want now performance, a higher level of performance," Tan says.

Time will tell if Tan, whose term ends April Fool's Day 2006, can indeed hit his targets.

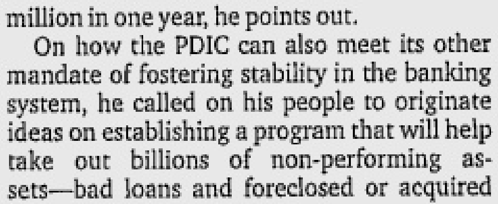
Australian MBA in Manila, anyone?

UNDER an exclusive arrangement with the Makati City-based Esteban International School, the University of Western Australia (UWA) has opened its doors to prospective students in the Philippines interested in upgrading their entrepreneurial know-how and business skills through an MBA program offering education from one of the best management schools in the Asia-Pacific region.

"It's education with an international perspective applied to a Philippine business context," says Martin Cebis, one of the professors flown into Manila to teach classes at the 26th floor of the sleek Ayala Life-FGU Center in Makati City. "The program is as academically rigorous as that taught in Australia." To ensure that the quality of education in the program is comparable to the quality taught in Australia, 9 out of 12 professors are flown into Manila on a regular basis to conduct classes.

Expatriates make up about 40 percent of the classes. The rest are Filipinos or Chinese-Filipinos who are either heads of their family businesses, presidents, and other top executives of multinational and local corporations engaged in a broad scope of industries including petrochemicals, media, banking, IT, retailing, and transportation. The average student age is 30 to 35.

Starting with 12 students last year, enrollment has grown to just under 30 with the first batch set to graduate in March 2004. Although not required, graduates are encouraged to attend graduation ceremonies in Australia and march alongside fellow graduates from the programs running in Australia, Singapore, Jakarta, Shanghai and Hong Kong.



ESTEBAN MANDY NAVASERO

The UWA campus is located just outside the commercial center of Perth, the capital of Western Australia. It first opened its doors in 1911. Its Alumni include a former Australian prime minister.

When asked about the cost of the program in Singapore as compared to other programs, Tony Esteban says, "With programs charging as low as $9,000 from lesser known institutions to as high as $85,000 for schools like University of Chicago and INSEAD, UWA only charges $12,000." When asked about the program in the Philippines, he says, "Same model. Same price. Same quality."

Unlike studying overseas where one gets a patently foreign perspective, Martin Cebis points out that: "Our professors teach in many countries and this is both educational for us as professors and a challenge. While the fundamentals of my course, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, are the same in any country I teach in, the applications may differ from culture to culture. This often leads to lively discussions with both sides profiting from the experience." To ensure that learning is relevant, local professors assist and co-facilitate some of the subjects.

"The program has three main pillars: Leadership, Strategy and Innovation. Upon finishing the course graduates are expected either to improve their management skills previously acquired in their workplace as employee or employer—or move on to a more exciting career choice."

Taking its cue from the UWA motto, "To seek wisdom. To teach the best," the courses hew close to these lines. Ethics is also a touchstone and is vigorously emphasized "because we want to say that in business, like any other field, nice guys can and do win," says Cebis.

In the end, Cebis is clear about the rewards of being on the top of the heap.

"We want our students to be the type of successful businessman and entrepreneur who goes beyond the desire to make more money to attain power," he says. "It's all about finding satisfaction in the various options or choices he has available to him, finding joy in a job that he loves first and foremost. Money is secondary."

For more information on the UWA-MBA Program Manila, call 844-2812 or 887-6390 or e-mail's inquiries to esteban@i-next.net.

Staff pretend to be new hires to cope with firm's new name

BARELY a year and a half after undergoing a life-changing name change, ad agency Lowe Manila proves that it is an industry creative powerhouse to contend with after winning big in the 18th Ad Congress' Araw Awards.

Considered one of most stringent local advertising competitions ever, the Araw saw an estimated 3,000 entries pared down to 400 plus finalists and finally to just over 100 winners. Despite these conditions, Lowe won a platinum for its Surf "Drama" radio commercial; three golds for Rexona "Gasgas" Best Radio Commercial, Fita "Best Friend" Best Copy TV, Fita "Best Friend" Best Casting TV; four silvers for Alaska "Elena" Best TV Single Entry, Fita "Best Friend" TV Single Entry, Max's "Kanta" RC Best Single Entry, Carefree "Origami" Trade Kit Best Design; and three bronzes for Kitkat "Shadow" Best TV Low Budget, Skyflakes "Biyenan" Best RC and Bestfoods Spaghetti "Edward" Best Casting TV. "What makes this victory all the sweeter is we won recognition for the very same work that helped build our clients' businesses," points out Raul Castro, VP-executive creative director.

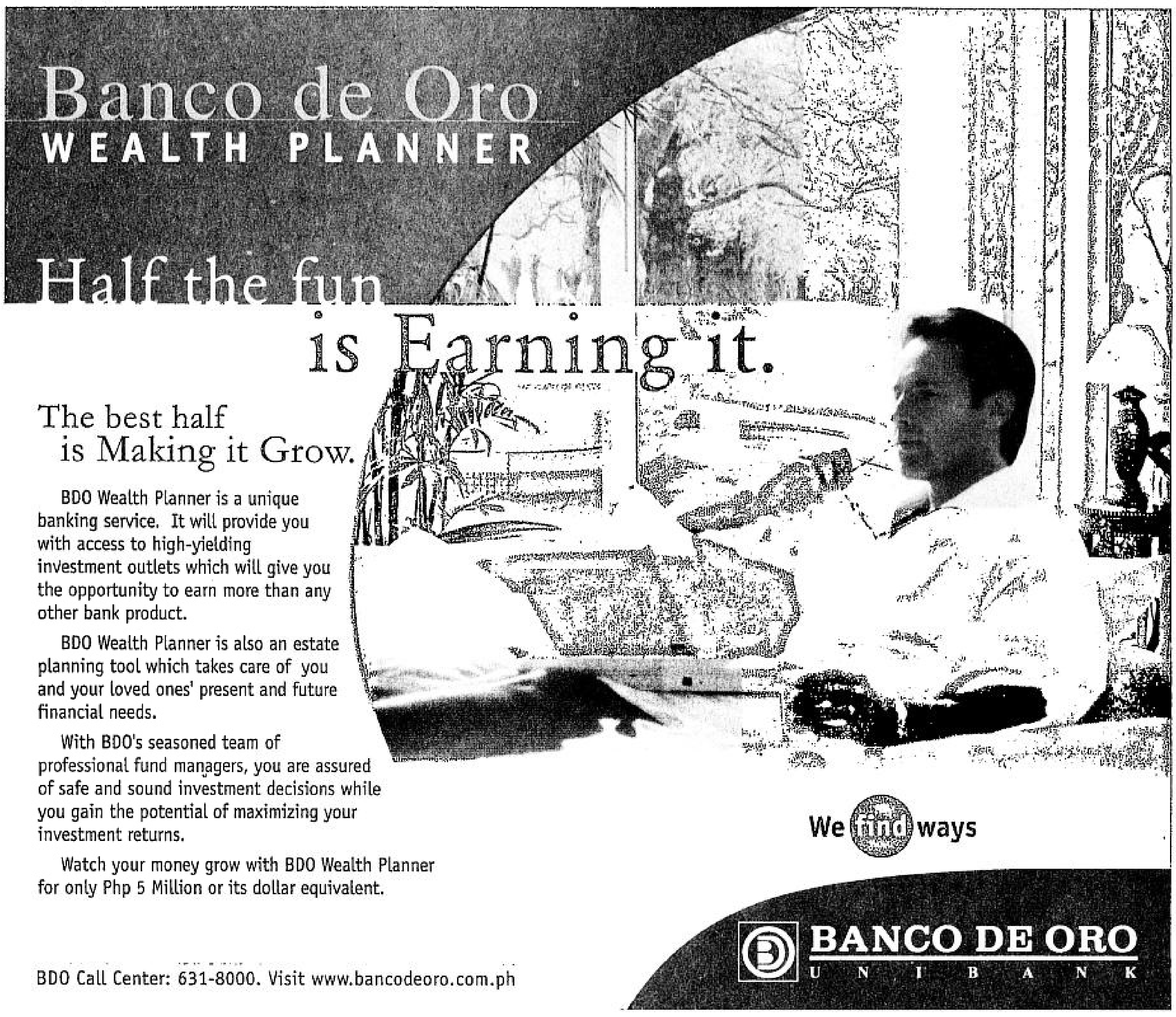
Formerly known as Lintas, a worldwide merger in 2001 caused a name change to Lowe. With the stroke of pen, Lintas ceased to exist and with it the spirit that drove the agency, not to mention a network especially in Asia, to heights of success. In a strange turn of events, it became the industry's "newest" agency after 22 years of existence.

But the Lowe pedigree was not one to be scoffed at. Sir Frank Lowe, its founder, is known to have single-handedly influenced a generation of British ad professionals in the '70s who in turn ignited a revolution in British advertising that led to the smart, witty pieces of persuasion the genre is known for. He firmly believes that to persuade more effectively, advertising must seek to involve, engage and intrigue. A critically acclaimed agency group in Europe and America, Lowe is built on the belief that in a marketing landscape of parity products and media clutter, creativity is not only imperative, it makes business sense.

It is a consistent performer in prestigious international advertising competitions such as the Cannes Lions. The challenge for Lowe Manila was to live up to this heritage.

According to Mariles Gustilo, president and CEO: "It was an anxious time for us all. The traditional management solution would've been to bring in a 'change agent'—someone from the outside to shake up the organization. But we decided not to do that. I knew we had enough talent inside to pull this off, if only we shared the same mindset and standards. So we collectively set our sights toward a new direction. To help rid ourselves of baggage, we pretended we were all new hires of a different organization—all 150 of us! We were also fortunate that head office was very generous in helping us understand the Lowe DNA. As expected with any change, there was a lot of tension, frustration and exasperation."

The struggle was well worth it as Lowe Manila's performance in the Araw caps off what many consider a remarkable year marked by a grand slam victory in the Unilever ABC Awards held February 2003; first and second place wins for Best in TV in the 2002 Creative Guild Awards held in April 2003; a nomination for Best in Creative in the 2002 Agency of the Year Awards held in August 2003; and finally, the honor of the Fita "Best friend" TVC being the lone Philippine entry to make it as a finalist in the Best in TV category of the 2002 Cannes Lions held in June 2003.



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Honda Cars Kalookan, Inc. Tel. No. (02) 366 5701
Honda Cars Alabang Tel. No. (02) 807 7889
Honda Cars Quezon City, Inc. Tel. Nos. (02) 712 6850 to 61, 731 1532,732 8556,732 8166
Honda Cars Shaw Tel. Nos. (02) 717 1681 to 85
Honda Cars Manila Tel. No. (02) 562 4548
Honda Cars Fairview Tel. Nos. (02) 935 2655, 935 2620
Honda Cars Marikina Tel. Nos. (02) 998 0512, 998 1142

Provincial
Honda Cars Pangasinan Tel. No. (075) 522 1488
Honda Cars Cebu, Inc. Tel. No. (032) 231 3502
Honda Cars San Pablo, Inc. Tel. Nos. (049) 562 7713 to 14
Honda Cars Davao, Inc. Tel. Nos. (082) 221 7406, 222 2171
Honda Cars Negros Occidental Tel. Nos. (034) 441 1273, 441 1275
Honda Cars Pampanga, Inc. Tel. Nos. (045) 963 5554, 963 5556
Honda Cars Tarlac, Inc. Tel. No. (045) 982 8003
Honda Cars Cagayan Tel. Nos. (088) 858 4010 to 11, 858 1117 to 18
Honda Cars Gen. Santos, Inc. Tel. Nos. (083) 553 9796 to 97,301 3108
Honda Cars Mandaue Tel. No. (032) 422 3700
Honda Cars Isabela, Inc. Tel. No. (078) 652 1245

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People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Bulacan steps up eco-waste management

BULACAN Gov. Josefina M. Dela Cruz is spearheading the accelerated implementation of waste reduction, sorting and segregation, composting, and recycling in her province, in line with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which mandates the *barangays* to ecological solid waste management in their constituencies.

GOV. Dela Cruz

Dela Cruz has committed additional support for *barangay* initiatives in view of the increasing problem of the province due to the dumping of garbage—much of it from Metro Manila—that could also affect the efforts of the provincial government in generating substantial investments in the major products of the province, such as *kapeng* Tagalog, *inipit, minasa, tinapang bangus, ensaymada, pastillas, longganisa*.

Dela Cruz has pledged the support of the province to the local executives in carrying out a comprehensive program to be launched in the Municipality of Guiguinto, with the establishment of a medium-scale ecology center system or Materials Recovery Facility or Ecology Center to help absorb what the barangay-based system may not be able to manage, especially in the busy, heavily populated, commercial and business areas.

Guiguinto, under its Mayor Ambrosio "Boy" Cruz, is the first municipality that has computerized its real property tax system, which is otherwise merely a negotiable transaction in the local governments. The municipality is also now the pilot for an ongoing government effort to upgrade fiscal management among local governments.

Guiguinto will be conducting a yearlong orientation, education, and training on ecological solid waste management for its barangays, in coordination with Bangon Kalikasan Movement, a non-government environmental organization.

To start with, the municipality, with the help of Bangon Kalikasan Movement, held an initial whole-day orientation-seminar Nov. 25 for the members of the ecological solid waste management committees of the barangays, including *barangay* captains, *kagawads*, homeowners, and youth leaders. Other orientation activities, hand-in-hand with organizing, will be conducted throughout the year.

The Guiguinto project is just the start and will be replicated in the other municipalities and cities of Bulacan as implemented in the barangays in coordination with Bangon Kalikasan Movement.

"Waste management is our immediate concern," Dela Cruz said, "but it is really tied up with our continuing and stepped-up efforts to conserve and enhance Bulacan's resources." Waste from the kitchens and farms of Bulacan, said Dela Cruz, should be turned into compost or organic fertilizer, as she envisions Bulacan to be a leading producer of organic fertilizer, as well as a center for the manufacture of useful, profitable, and beautiful products from recycling.

"We also plan to institutionalize environmental learning centers in the whole province. This way, our people will really understand what it means to be fully concerned about our resources. Bulakeños are very industrious and creative, but we ourselves will have to ensure that we will continue living in a clean, safe, and sustainable environment, said Dela Cruz.

Nescafe 'De-Wired' on tour

THE SUCCESSFULY concluded "Nescafe De-Wired: The Acoustic Band Competition" held August and September is back to bring us more, this time all compiled in an album. Vicor Music Corp and Cafe Nescafe joined forces to present this one-of-a-kind collection of mesmerizing original acoustic renditions made artistically by the 12 young and talented acoustic performers that won in the competition. They have been touring malls and entertainment venues since Nov. 28 at City Life Style, Timog, Nov. 29, Dec. 5 and on Dec. 21 at Café Nescafe, Alabang Town Center, Dec. 12 at Robinsons Galleria and Dec. 20 at Rockwell Powerplant Mall. Bewildering and astounding music will imprison your hearts as Cruxada (gand finalist), Shortcake (1st Runner-up), Revert and Lilac Wine (tied at 2nd Runner-up), Acoustic Dream, Jaycie & Honey, Beyond Rhythm, Ethereal, Art of Dona, New Spell and Ivy League play different acoustic versions in their own different sounds and styles.

A show filled with excitement and fun with thrilling games and gimmicks will hype up the afternoon, because lots of cool stuff and prizes await everyone. Having a cup of warm Nescafe while listening in to great acoustic music will make your late afternoon perfect.

"Nescafe De-Wired: The Album Tour" is presented by Cafe Nescafe in cooperation with Vicor Music Corp and brought to you by Godiva and Lipovitan. This series of events is organized by the Big Picture Productions.

UP BETA EPSILON PARTICIPATES IN UP LANTERN PARADE

The UP Beta Epsilon Fraternity will be a major participant in this year's UP Lantern Parade on Dec 17. The parade will feature a marching band followed by members and friends of the Beta Epsilon, then frolicking behind are the 3-meter tall 'Higantes' in the image of top UP personalities. Architect Geromino Manahan BS Arch '61 and former Dean of the UP College of Architecture is the chair for the BE Lantern Parade participation. The traditional fireworks display of the UP Lantern Parade will be sponsored by the Beta Epsilon Fraternity. This parade participation will serve as a kick-off towards a year long series of activities for the Beta Epsilon Fraternity, which will be celebrating 75 years of fruitful and fulfilling brotherhood in service to the University of the Philippines and to country. The theme for the diamond jubilee celebration is 'Beta Epsilon@75 Beyond Engineering: Brotherhood & Excellence!'. The Beta Epsilon Fraternity is the oldest fraternity in the UP College of Engineering, and has the distinction of receiving the Vinzon Award for the creation of the 'Beta Way'. The Beta Epsilon Alumni Inc. (BEAI), in association with overseas affiliates Beta Epsilon North America (Bena) and Beta Epsilon Sa Australia (Besa), is readying plans for the grand homecoming. Around 100 members of the fraternity living abroad will be coming over to join two-week long festivities in Feb 2 to 15, 2004. For details, call Brother Bernie Abis at 0917-8912727 or e-mail bernie.abis@findme.com.ph.

TRIUMPH AWARDS NIGHT HONORS TOP DEALERS

Triumph International (Philippines) Inc recently honored its top dealers during its 2nd Trimestral Dealers Assembly (TDA) 2003 held Nov. 16 at the Westin Philippine Plaza. Hosted by celebrities Bernadette Allyson and Arnell Ignacio, the TDA event was a fun-filled entertainment extravaganza and awards ceremony inspired by the rich legacy of original Pilipino music (OPM). Aptly called 'Sing Galing Mo!,' the event was highlighted by spellbinding performances by OPM greats Hajji Alejandro and Rey Valera, as well as mini-fashion shows and a sing-along contest where the top winners won fabulous cash prizes. Established in 1886 in Heubach, Germany, Triumph is the world's leading intimate apparel brand with a global workforce of 36,000 people in over 150 countries. It has also been the leading brand across Asia for the past 40 years. Triumph established its local franchise-Triumph International (Philippines) Inc on March 6, 1974 as a manufacturing facility. Its direct sales operations formally started on June 25, 1990. Shown are Triumph's Regional Top Quality Recruiters-GD Category (from left) Leonor Haduca, Emilia Salaber, Janice Lozano (RSM Metro and Luzon), Rebecca Vibora, Jun Yu (direct sales manager), Del Rivera (RSM Visayas/Mindanao), Adelaida Yalung, Jane Torio, Alicia Dela Cruz, Wilma Cahayom and Emma Macatangay.

INNOVATING IT EDUCATION

As a complimentary measure to its IT curriculum, The Asian College of Science and Technology (Acsat) recently established the St. Patrick Institute of Health Services, which offers six-month to two-year courses on care giving and nursing assistance with free online employment assistance and international language courses. Certified by the Tesda with operating permit WTR no. 0313062203, St. Patrick offers world-class facilities with 14 training modules, manned by professionally trained instructors. Shown is Benjamin Sia, St. Patrick VP for operations (3rd from left) shaking hands with Cecile Gutierrez, Tesda district officer (2nd from right) during the formal awarding of the Tesda permit. Flanking Sia and Gutierrez are (from left) Josephine Jimenez, Acsat marketing head, Rufo Jawa, school director, and Pena Medina, Tesda supervisor. St. Patrick is a member of the Acsat Education System, one of the country's largest and pioneering IT schools. Care giving and nursing assistant courses are initially available in Acsat's Quezon City and Dumaguete campuses.

Bits Clips

OLPMC grand homecoming

THE OUR Lady of Pilar Montessori Center invites all alumni to its Grand Homecoming in celebration of its 25th anniversary on Dec. 13 at 6 p.m. at the OLPMC covered court. For details, call Teacher Blessie/Sir Jhun at 801-0071 or 800-6786.

PWC conducts tax seminar

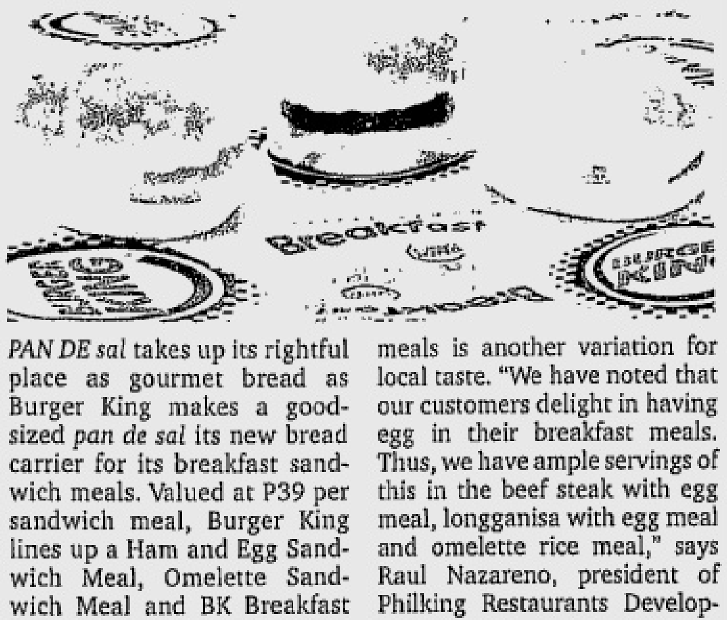
JOAQUIN Cunanan & Co/PricewaterhouseCoopers conducts a Tax Seminar on Dec. 8 for companies interested to know the latest tax developments and how these will impact on their yearend tax obligations. Tax services director Catherine Manahan, former Assistant Secretary of Finance, leads a team of tax experts from the firm who will discuss topics such as recent BIR rulings on fringe benefits tax, documentary stamp tax on inter-company advances, royalties on software, value-added tax, latest court decisions on excess income tax credits carryover, unallowable advertising expenses, and claims for VAT refund. Participants will also receive copies of the Consolidated Withholding Tax and Fringe Benefits Tax Regulations. The seminar will be held at the RCBC Plaza Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati.

Catering seminar

THE PROACTIVE Center for Training (PACT) will hold a Managing a Catering Business Seminar-Workshop from Dec. 8 to 17 (excluding weekends), from 1 to 6 p.m. at Ipanema Bar and Restaurant. 2nd level Eastwood City Walk, Eastwood City, Libis, Qeuzon City. The workshop is open to all caterers, food executives and other entrepreneurs planning to open a catering business. The 8-day training features lecturers and hands-on workshops on legal requirements, planning the menu, equipment and staffing, cost control, room arrangements, napkin folding and table skirting, among others. For inquiries, call 787-6370 or 0916-8226053.

ProductFILES

'Pan de sal' mornings at Burger King



PAN DE sal takes up its rightful place as gourmet bread as Burger King makes a good-sized *pan de sal* its new bread carrier for its breakfast sandwich meals. Valued at P39 per sandwich meal, Burger King lines up a Ham and Egg Sandwich Meal, Omelette Sandwich Meal and BK Breakfast Sandwich Meal, all with single-serve drink.

Others in the new BK breakfast line-up are all valued at P49 each: BK beef steak with egg meal; longganisa with egg meal; and omelette rice meal. All these are also with single-serve drink. Orange drink of choice is Eight-O' Clock.

The inclusion of egg in many meals is another variation for local taste. "We have noted that our customers delight in having egg in their breakfast meals. Thus, we have ample servings of this in the beef steak with egg meal, longganisa with egg meal and omelette rice meal," says Raul Nazareno, president of Philking Restaurants Development Corp, Philippine franchisee of Burger King.

Variety is one of the reasons behind the remarkable success of Burger King, which created the American icon, home of the Whopper. Burger King Corp and its franchisees operate more than 11,435 restaurants in all 50 US states and 57 countries and territories around the world.

Addressing invitations

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: I have been placed in charge of sending out invitations to the inauguration of our new office building. We are inviting all high ranking government officials and members of the diplomatic community. I need help regarding the addressing of the invitations, most especially for the President of the Philippines. Also, could you please include the proper address for government officials and lawyers as we are inviting quite a lot of them?

A: In the Philippines, titles are used all the time. It is actually considered a breach of etiquette not to use one's title in written communication and introductions. Although it is important to bear in mind that titles such as engineer, attorney, chair, vice-chair etc., are not valid titles. Nonetheless, in the Philippine business and social environment it is essential that you use these titles as it has already become an integral part of our culture.

Mr. Mrs. Ms, Doctor, Your Excellency and The honorable, are valid titles. Doctor includes both medical doctors as well as doctors of philosophy. Whether you are sending a business letter or inviting for a business function, you need to address people who hold titles in the proper way. Here are some examples of introductions using titles as well as examples of how to address people in written communication whether in a business letter or in an invitation to a corporate function using their titles:

The President of the Philippines and Ambassadors:

The President of the Philippines and Ambassadors whether foreign envoys to the Philippines or our own envoys abroad are always referred to as "Your Excellency" as such in formal invitations you would address the envelope as:

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Republic of the Philippines

Since our current president is female and married, ideally I would advice that you send two separate invitations to the president and to the first gentleman. The first gentleman is addressed as:

Atty. Jose Miguel T. Arroyo
First Gentleman of the Republic of the Philippines
or
Atty. Jose Miguel Arroyo

Should you wish to send only one invitation to both the president and the first gentleman then it is addressed as follows:

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Republic of the Philippines and Atty. Jose Miguel T. Arroyo

For Ambassadors:

His Excellency Ignacio Sagaz
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenepotentiary of the Kingdom of Spain (and Mrs. Aurora Sagaz) (if it is a Mr. And Mrs. Invite)
Or
His Excellency Ignacio Sagaz Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain (and Mrs. Aurora Sagaz)

Government officials:

All government officials, from the Vice-President down, are referred to as "The Honorable..." As such you should always use this title for written communication as well as introductions:

For example:
The Honorable Blas Ople
Secretary of Foreign Affairs
(And Mrs. Ople)
or
Secretary Blas Ople (and Mrs. Ople)
The Honorable Jejomar Binay
Mayor of Makati City (and Dr. Elenita Binay) (since his wife is a medical doctor make sure you include this title for invitations)
or
Mayor Jejomar Binay (and Dr. Binay)
The Honorable Ramon Revilla
Senator of the Republic of the Philippines and Mrs. Revilla
Or
Senator Ramon Revilla (and Mrs. Revilla)

Doctors of Medicine or Philosophy:
Dr. Simon Sison
Or
Simon Sison, M. D.
(and Mrs. Sison)
Dr. Juan Miguel Perez
Or
Juan Miguel Perez, PhD.
(and Mrs. Perez)

Lawyers, Engineers, Chairmen, etc.

Again, I would like to emphasize that although these are not valid titles one should always use them in business communication as it is already ingrained in Philippine culture to use these titles.

In written communication:
Atty. Or Attorney, Carlos de Guzman (and Mrs. De Guzman)
Eng. Or Engineer, Vicente Sanchez (and Mrs. Sanchez)
Arch. Or Architect Gil Coscolluela
Chairman Martin Fernandez (and Mrs. Fernandez)

Exceptions:

a. You are inviting spouses to the inauguration of your new office building and they are both government officials.

Send two separate invitations using their full titles

b. You are inviting spouses who are both doctors:

The Doctors Sison (if his wife uses her married name professionally)

If not, Dr. Simon Sison and Dr. Ana Concepcion

c. If they are both lawyers...

Atty. Carlos de Guzman and Atty. Catherine de Guzman (use the name the spouse uses professionally, either her married name or maiden name)

It is incorrect to say The attorneys de Guzman

d. If the husband is a lawyer and the wife is a doctor.

This is tricky because doctor is a higher title than a lawyer, as such the wife's name should be placed first. However, the lawyer husband may take offense. As such, the safest way is to send two separate invitations.

e. If the wife is a government official and the husband is a businessman

Again, this could be tricky, send two separate invitations. However the correct address should be:

(for example)
The Honorable Katrina T. Lopez
Governor of Batangas
and Mr. Carlos Lopez

E-mail your business etiquette queries to etiquetteconsultants@hotmail.com names of senders will not be published.

Within ARMM's . . .

From page B2-2

tract emerging IT based services; strategic management for the emerging world; and human resources, technology management and marketing imperatives for competitiveness.

Special issues that emerged from the discussions included needed changes in traditional corporate management with special focus on family businesses, globalization and modernization, Islamic considerations in doing business and the reintroduction of the spiritual into the formal Western-modelled secular organization.

Another concern was the institutionalization of collaborative mechanisms among schools, businesses, government agencies, civil society organizations and the community (including religious organizations).

At the end of the three days, the participants and the team felt a deep sense of satisfaction at the exercise.

As a participant put it, "Now we believe that Mindanao, especially ARMM, is finally in the radar screen of Manila, not as a trouble spot but as an opportunity. We are thankful that prestigious organizations like MAP and AIM will share resources and knowledge with us."

(The author is Professor at the Asian Institute of Management and (vice chair of the MAP Management Development Committee and Project Chair for the MAP Management Educators Workshop Committee. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

1st batch of ICD fellows . . .

From page B2-2

President Tomas Apacible and Malayan Insurance Co., Inc. chair Adelita Vergel de Dios. They presented during the conference the manual of certification on behalf of ICD. These Fellows have established and implemented governance programs and systems in their various positions and sphere of authority. The Founding Fellows deliberated on and presented the following new ICD Fellows:

Bañares, Joel Managing Director Synex Management Advisors Inc.
Benitez, Rene B. President Amalgamated Investment Bancorp.
Calero, Javier Jose chair ZMG Signium Ward Howell
Drilon, Rex C. II COO Ortigas and Company
Fider, Alex Erlito S. Senior Partner Picazo Buyco Tan Fider & Santos Law
Gatus, Mario President Drake Beam Morin
Go, Alfredo President LH Paragon
Lukban, Fernan Victor P. Program Director University of Asia and the Pacific
Paul, Jeremias Assistant Secretary Department of Finance
Suleik, Mercedes chair, Corporate Securities and Exchange Commission
Governance Committee
Villanueva, Edwin Partner VFL Advisors Inc.
Villanueva, Cesar Senior Partner Villanueva Gabionza and De Santos Law Offices
Yuchengco, Alfonso III Partner Argosy Advisers Inc.
Zulueta, Jesus Jr. CEO ZMG Signium Ward Howell

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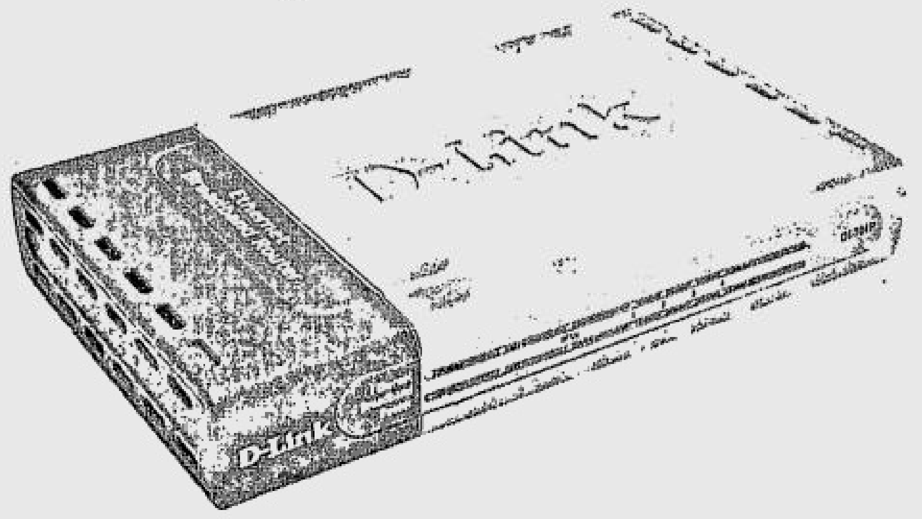

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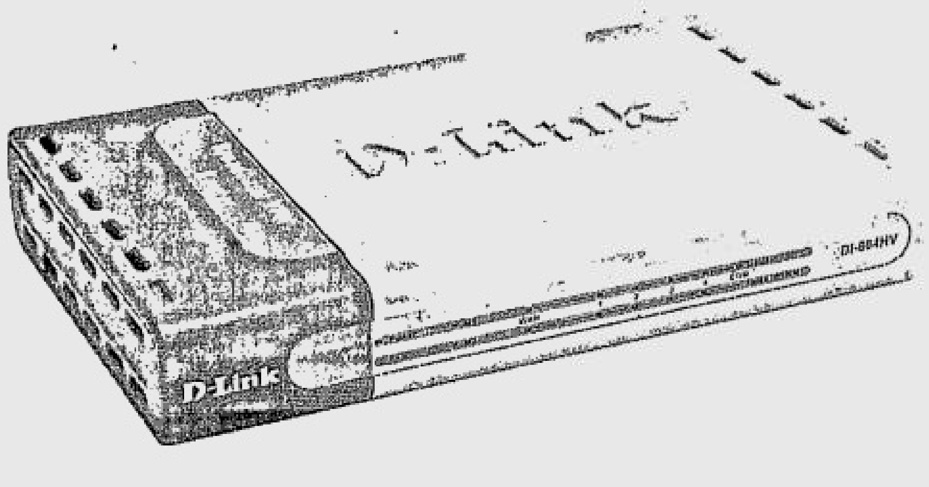

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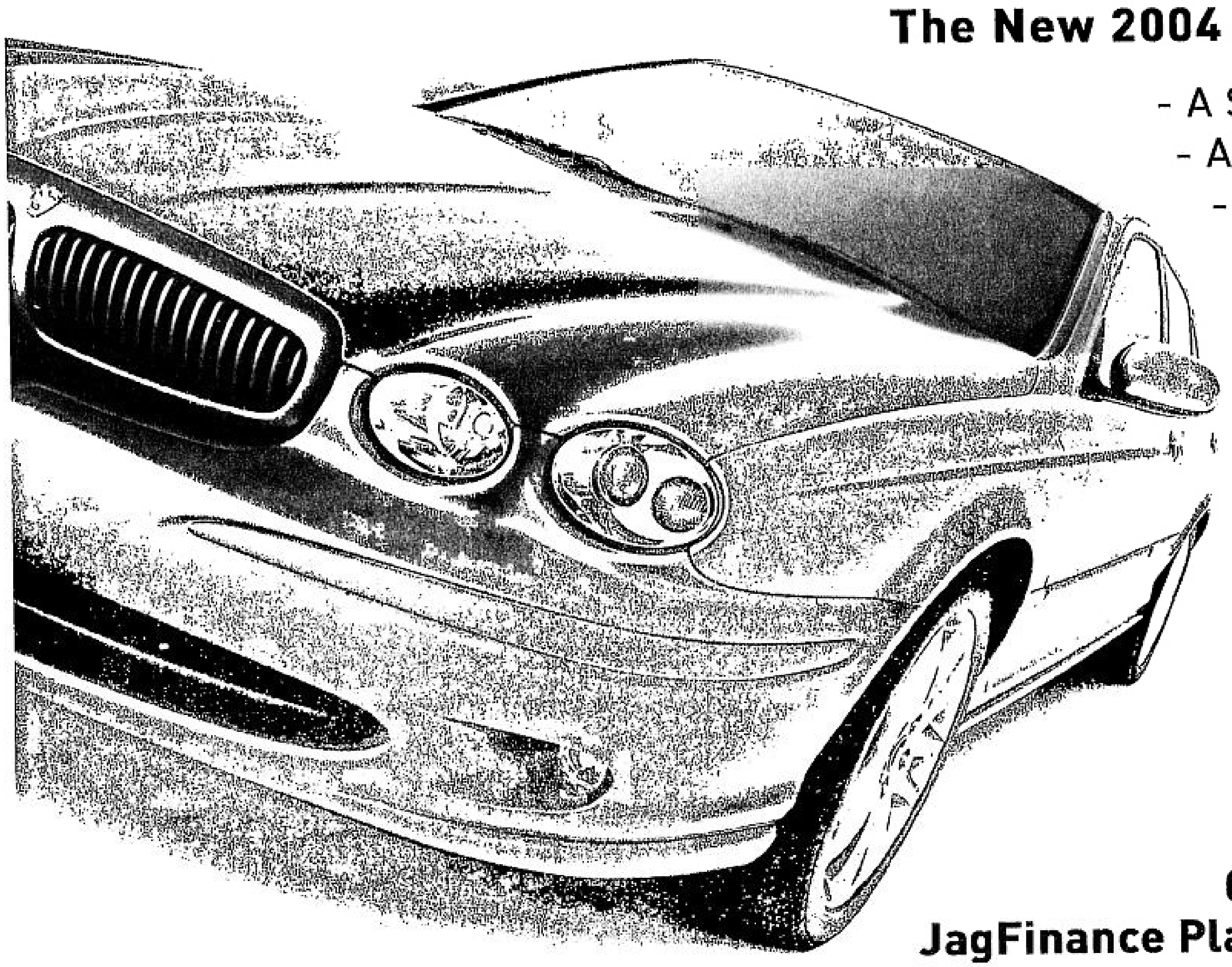

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Editor Louie C. Camino

Manay Ichu: I'll help campaign for FPJ, not GMA

MACEDA

> 'Gina asked me to help campaign for GMA. I said I would because I like the President's work ethics. But if FPJ runs, I told her not to expect anything from me'

By Marinel R. Cruz

VETERAN movie producer and show biz stalwart Marichu Vera Perez-Maceda had to ask the blessing of her sister, Gina de Venecia, to be able to endorse action king Fernando Poe Jr. as a candidate for president in 2004.

Gina is the wife of Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Maceda told INQUIRER Entertainment that she would support and campaign for FPJ, who is an opposition candidate, despite her sister's political affiliation with the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Speaker is co-chair of the Lakas-CMD.

"I had to really think hard about it," said Maceda, popularly known in the industry as *Manay* Ichu. "Gina asked me to help her campaign for GMA. I said I would gladly help because I personally like the President's work ethics. But if Ronnie (Poe's nickname) would run, I told her not to expect anything from me.

"She took it well," *Manay* Ichu added.

She said that just last week, Lakas-CMD was encouraging her sister Gina to join the party's senatorial slate because it "wanted somebody to represent the women and children in the Senate."

"She's seriously thinking of running, but she's still waiting for the survey results," said *Manay* Ichu, during a baby shower she hosted for actress Ruffa Gutierrez's daughter, Gabriela Lorin, at the Vera Perez compound in San Juan.

Manay Ichu said she has been friends with FPJ and his wife, actress Susan Roces, for many years. She said she believes the actor has the discipline required of a president.

"He also has the ability to inspire, which is a trait that we badly need at this time," she said. "And he has a very good sense of fairness."

She said FPJ is not easily swayed by intrigues. "He studies everything first," she said. "He's not someone who easily reacts. He is not impulsive."

She believes that if FPJ wins, he would not abuse his power. "He's not greedy," she said. "He's a very simple man with very simple tastes. He is content with what he has."

Manay Ichu was the president of the Film Development Foundation of the Philippines, which was meant to boost the production of quality Filipino films. It is now known as the Film Development Council, with director Laurice Guillen as chair.

Marichu and Gina are daughters of Dr. Jose and Mrs. Azucena Perez, who built Sampaguita Pictures, one of the Big Four movie studios in the '50s and '60s.

Susan Roces appeared in several Sampaguita movies in the 1960s.

WE SHOULD honor Aunor, says Viewfinder.

Nora Aunor does not deserve shabby treatment

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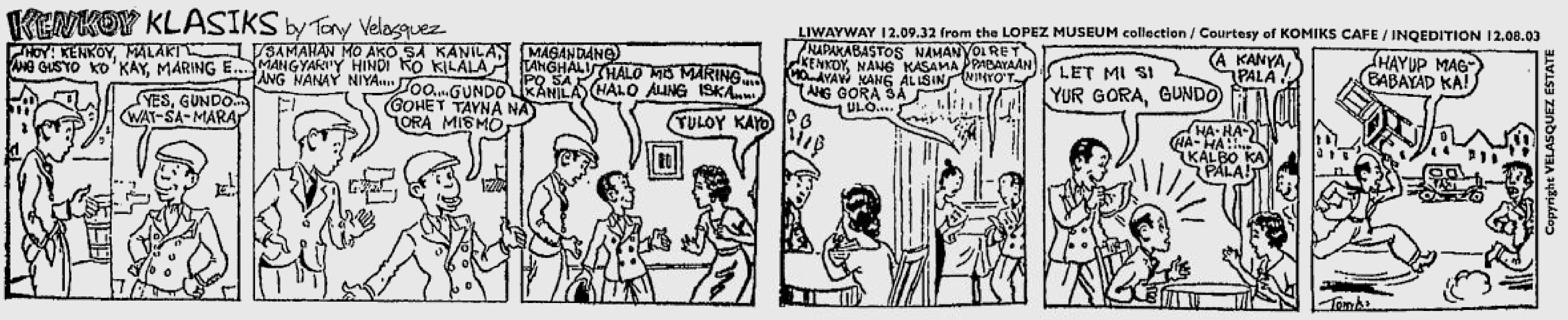
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OO... GUNDO GOHET TAYNA NA ORA MISMO
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TULOY KAYO
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A KANYA PALA!
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HAYUP MAG-BABAYAD KA!
Tomb.
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Dennis at the movies

By Marinel R. Cruz

"AS an actor, I learn a lot from watching films. From these films, I'm able to generate the right emotions I need to portray my roles convincingly."

That is actor and commercial model Dennis Trillo explaining why he spent a lot of money on more than 300 VCDs and DVD titles that he keeps in his room at the family home in San Mateo, Rizal. But for a newcomer in show biz, the young man seems to be serious about improving his craft.

"With my kind of work, having a movie and music library is important," Dennis says during this Out of the Closet visit. "I also plan to venture into film directing someday."

Instead of spending his money bar-hopping, like most celebrities his age do, Dennis made sure to get copies of the works of his favorite directors Paul Thomas Anderson ("Hard Eight," "Boogie Nights,") Martin Scorsese ("Raging Bull," "Goodfellas") Darren Arronofsky ("Requiem for a Dream") and films starring his favorite actors Robert de Niro ("The Fan," "Cape Fear" and "Deer Hunter") and Jack Nicholson ("The Shining," "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest").

Dennis has movies of all genres, but prefers action and adventure. "I don't go for movies with too much dialogue," he says. "I like them fast paced and with lots of crazy camera angles."

His movie collection ranges from the 1941 classic "Citizen Kane" to the newly released Japanese action vehicle "Versus" by Ryuhei Kitamura. "Bowling for Columbine," Michael Moore's Oscar-winning documentary about gun violence in America, is his current favorite.

Dennis says he would rather stay home and watch movies or listen to "death metal" music. He also plays the drums and guitar, and is "obsessed" with the late rock 'n' roll legend Jimi Hendrix and the Led Zeppelin band.

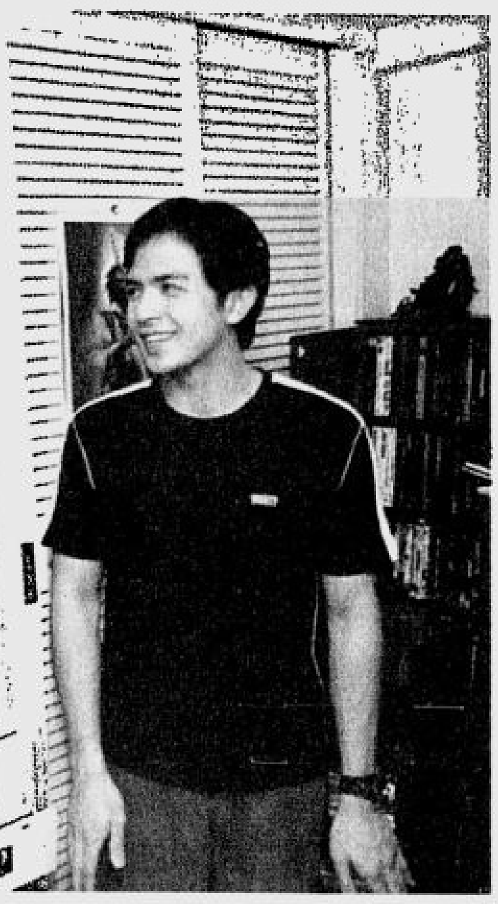
"I was part of a band called Moyg back in college," says the international studies graduate of Miriam College. "I was the drummer. But we played punk and ska. Now that I don't have the time anymore, I play by myself."

Dennis, 23, has been doing commercials since he was 12. But he was best remembered as Jojie, the panicky guy caught in traffic on his way to a date, in Globe's "autoload" commercial.

Weeknights, he plays Glen on GMA 7's "Twin Hearts," which also stars Tanya Garcia, Dingdong Dantes, Pops Fernandez, Rudy Fernandez, Lani Mercado and Jestoni Alarcon.

Dennis is pleased that his "Twin Hearts" character is so much like him. "He prefers casual clothes to preppy ones," he says of the character. "I have no problem with wearing jeans all the time."

FILM BUFF has an extensive collection of almost all genres, in VCD and DVD form, topped by Orson Welles' classic "Citizen Kane" (left).



OUT OF THE CLOSET

Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

In fact, Dennis has more than 50 pairs of jeans in different cuts and colors, all folded inside an antique chest.

"I found this chest in our stock room," he says. "The family seemed to have forgotten it. I brought it to my room. I could put about a hundred pairs in it. But I gave most of my jeans away. The chest probably has a little less than 50 pairs now."

Jeans. "I wear only Ego jeans to tapings because I endorse them. I like the fit. I'm not saying it because I'm endorsing it. I also like its soft fabric and its worn-out look."

T-shirts. "I've had this black Jimi Hendrix shirt since I was in high school. I still wear it up to now. Jimi Hendrix is one of my rock 'n' roll idols. This is a rare find. I bought this in Greenhills. This is a Rockabilia shirt."

Polos. "My favorite is in the laundry right now. It's a retro shirt. It has unique colors. It reminds me of the colors of the '70s—green, orange, brown. It's a gift from a special someone.

"I don't go for brands, I look for clothes that fit me nicely. I also don't like clothes made of heavy fabric. *Gusto ko, presko*."

Formal wear. "I only have two suits and one *barong* Tagalog. I get to wear them only on tapings and awards shows anyway. I wore one on the taping of Mayor [Lito] Atienza's TV series. If I need to wear a different one, I borrow from my dad."

Belts. "My mom buys me my belts. My current favorite is a garrison belt. *Uso kasi*. My character does not really care too much for belts. Neither do I."

Jackets. "My favorite is an Adidas rain jacket. I have yet to try wearing this under the rain, though. This is only a few weeks old. My mom bought this from *ukay-ukay*. It's hard to find a jacket that fits me nicely, and this one does."

Rubber shoes. "My Chuck Taylor pair goes well with any shirts and pants. This pair looks good with both blue jeans and khaki. I've had this for a year now."

Loafers. "My mom bought this pair in Hong Kong. It's really sturdy. Just look at how thick its sole is. It has cushions, too. *Masarap sa paa*.

"I also have a pair black shoes that I use only when I'm in formal attire. I would really like to show it to you but it's in my car."

Bags. "I don't like bringing gym bags. I like knapsacks better. I can carry all the important things in one bag. My favorite bag has many pockets. I use it especially when I play badminton."

Caps. "My room used to be full of caps of different shapes and sizes. I collected them when I was in high school. I gave most of them away. I'm very attached to this one cap because of its style. The back is made entirely of net. The front has 'Coors' written on it."

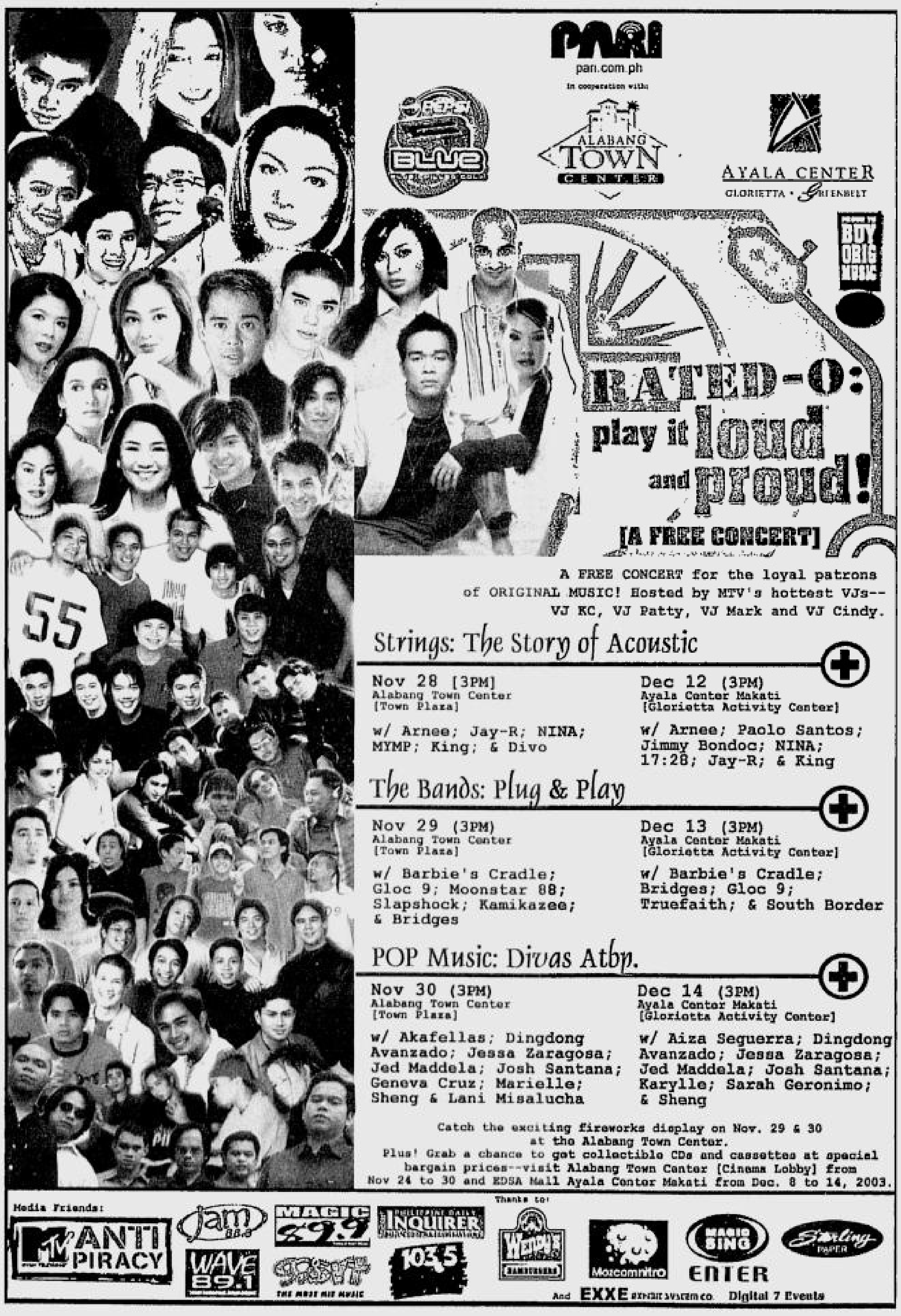
Perfumes. "I like Banana Republic Classic because I can use it day or night. It lasts longer than most perfumes, too."

AWARD WEAR. His only *barong* is worn to awards nights.

MUSIC MAN used to be in a band in school, plays acoustic guitar and drums (below), and likes to listen to "death metal."

BOXERS IN BED is what he prefers.

LEATHER-BOUND. He has more leather shoes, but he favors his Chuck Taylor pair.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Alabang Town Center
[Town Plaza]
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Dec 12 (3PM)
Ayala Center Makati
[Glorietta Activity Center]
w/ Arnee; Paolo Santos; Jimmy Bondoc; NINA; 17:28; Jay-R; & King

The Bands: Plug & Play

Nov 29 (3PM)
Alabang Town Center
[Town Plaza]
w/ Barbie's Cradle; Gloc 9; Moonstar 88; Slapshock; Kamikazee; & Bridges

Dec 13 (3PM)
Ayala Center Makati
[Glorietta Activity Center]
w/ Barbie's Cradle; Bridges; Gloc 9; Truefaith; & South Border

POP Music: Divas Atbp.

Nov 30 (3PM)
Alabang Town Center
[Town Plaza]
w/ Akafellas; Dingdong Avanzado; Jessa Zaragosa; Jed Maddela; Josh Santana; Geneva Cruz; Marielle; Sheng & Lani Misalucha

Dec 14 (3PM)
Ayala Center Makati
[Glorietta Activity Center]
w/ Aiza Seguerra; Dingdong Avanzado; Jessa Zaragosa; Jed Maddela; Josh Santana; Karylle; Sarah Geronimo; & Sheng

Catch the exciting fireworks display on Nov. 29 & 30 at the Alabang Town Center.
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Nyoy, Mannos back in 'Fully Loaded'

AFTER "Loaded" and then "Re-Loaded," Nyoy Volante and Mannos save the best for last with "Fully Loaded," the third repeat of their successful concert, on Dec. 12 at the Music Museum.

Ogie Alcasid, tenor Nolyn Cabahug and pop princess Sarah Geronimo will join Nyoy and bassist Cocoy Aranas, violinist Jerome Nunez and k-hon player Glenn Dalit in the concert.

Nyoy and Mannos will reprise some of the most applauded numbers from the first two shows, and add some new ones.

"Fully Loaded" is presented by Nestle KitKat, Eventures and Conciertos Y Eventos in cooperation with Sinutab, Max's Fried Chicken Tutuban and LRT Buendia, PLDT My Music & Levi's.

Special Thanks to Lyric Piano Corp., Miguel Francisco of Njork, Crystal Clear Purified Drinking Water, Artic Flavoured Vodka, Vicor Music Corporation, Neo Holistic Center, Eli Agabin Photography, Sky Internet, Jam 88.3 (Your Kind of Mix), Wave 89.1 (Your Lifestyle, Your Music), Magic 89.9 (Today's Best Music), 99.5 RT (The Most Hit Music) and 103.5 K-Lite (Manila's Light Alternative).

For tickets and reservations, call the Music Museum Ticketron (721-6726), all Ticketworld outlets at (891-5610), Conciertos y Eventos (371-2333), and 7003 Dynamix (533-8153, 728-0945 or 0917-9340526).

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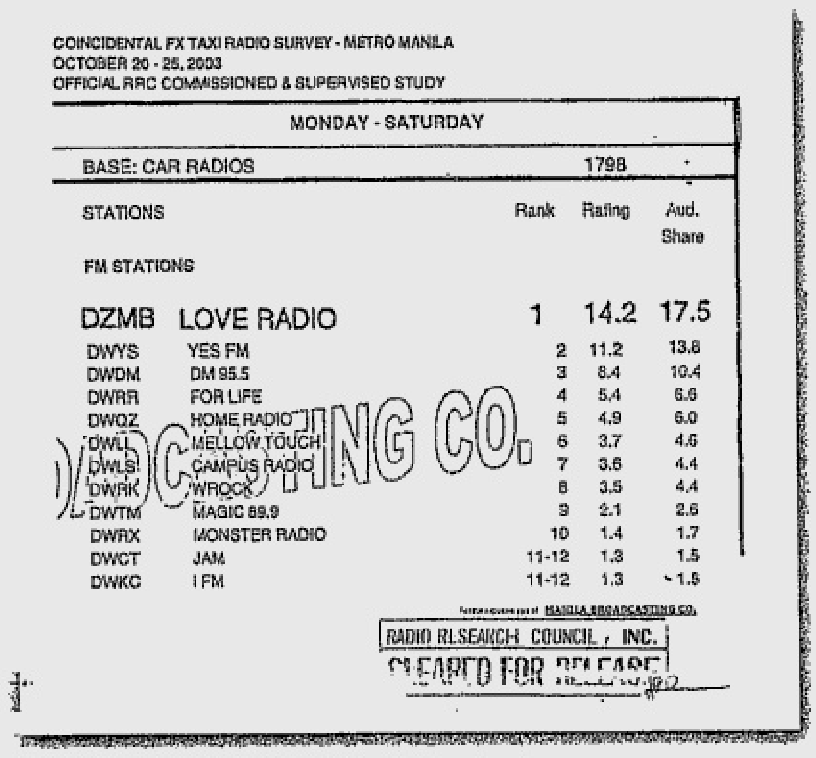

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OCTOBER 20 - 25, 2003
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MONDAY - SATURDAY				
BASE: CAR RADIOS			1798	
STATIONS		Rank	Rating	Aud. Share
FM STATIONS				
DZMB	LOVE RADIO	1	14.2	17.5
DWYS	YES FM	2	11.2	13.8
DWDM	DM 95.5	3	8.4	10.4
DWRR	FOR LIFE	4	5.4	6.6
DWQZ	HOME RADIO	5	4.9	6.0
DWLL	MELLOW TOUCH	6	3.7	4.6
DWLS	CAMPUS RADIO	7	3.6	4.4
DWRK	WROCK	8	3.5	4.4
DWTM	MAGIC 89.9	9	2.1	2.6
DWRX	MONSTER RADIO	10	1.4	1.7
DWCT	JAM	11-12	1.3	1.5
DWKC	I FM	11-12	1.3	1.5

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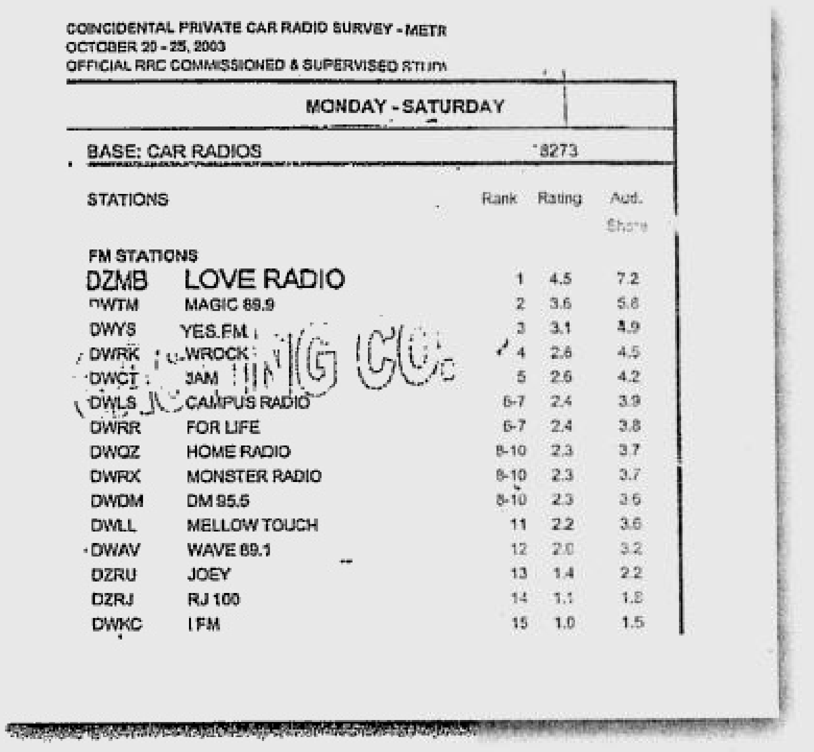

COINCIDENTAL PRIVATE CAR RADIO SURVEY - METR
OCTOBER 20 - 25, 2003
OFFICIAL RRC COMMISSIONED & SUPERVISED STUI

MONDAY - SATURDAY				
BASE: CAR RADIOS			8273	
STATIONS		Rank	Rating	Aud. Share
FM STATIONS				
DZMB	LOVE RADIO	1	4.5	7.2
DWTM	MAGIC 89.9	2	3.6	5.8
DWYS	YES FM	3	3.1	4.9
DWRK	WROCK	4	2.8	4.5
DWCT	JAM	5	2.6	4.2
DWLS	CAMPUS RADIO	6-7	2.4	3.9
DWRR	FOR LIFE	6-7	2.4	3.8
DWQZ	HOME RADIO	8-10	2.3	3.7
DWRX	MONSTER RADIO	8-10	2.3	3.7
DWDM	DM 95.5	8-10	2.3	3.6
DWLL	MELLOW TOUCH	11	2.2	3.6
DWAV	WAVE 89.1	12	2.0	3.2
DZRU	JOEY	13	1.4	2.2
DZRJ	RJ 100	14	1.1	1.8
DWKC	I FM	15	1.0	1.5

LOVE RADIO 90.7

KAILANGAN PA BANG I-MEMORIZE YAN?

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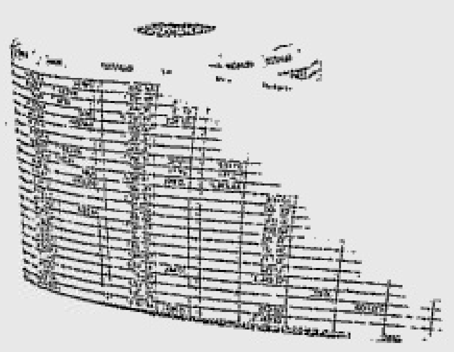
MANILA BROADCASTING COMPANY

Are you wiping your child with toilet paper that is recycled office paper?



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8 LOONEY TUNES
9 MR. SUAVE
10 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
11 CHAVIT SINGSON
12 BABAE SA BREAKWATER

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 STAR RUNNER
2 CHAVIT SINGSON
3 MR. SUAVE
4 BABAE SA BREAKWATER

SM CITY ILOILO
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1 MR. SUAVE
2 RESERVED
3 CHAVIT SINGSON
4 THE PHONE
5 DARK BLUE
6 UPTOWN GIRLS
7 RESERVED
8 THE SPY

SM CITY MANILA
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1 STAR RUNNER
2 ELF
3 OUT OF TIME
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
6 MASTER & COMMANDER
7 LOONEY TUNES
8 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
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1	**INTOLERABLE CRUELTY** 12:00 FS/12:30 MF/2:35/4:40/6:45/8:50/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:40 END
2	**ELF** 11:35 FS/12:05 MF/2:15/4:25/6:35/8:45/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END

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2 **JEEPERS CREEPERS 2** 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:35	5 **STAR RUNNER** 10:20, 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
3 **FIGHTING TEMPTATION** 11:00, 1:40, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00	6 **THE GRUDGE** 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00
7 **BABAE SA BREAKWATER** 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:55	9 **SCARY MOVIE 3** 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 **LOONEY TUNES** 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00	10 **COLD CREEK MANOR** 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

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1 STAR RUNNER - 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
2 THE GRUDGE - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:35, 6:25, 8:15, 10:00
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 FIGHTING TEMPTATION - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50
5 OUT OF TIME - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 10:00
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS - 11:15, 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 8:00, 10:00

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1 SCARY MOVIE 3
2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 OUT OF TIME
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS
6 STAR RUNNER
7 FIGHTING TEMPTATION
8 LOONEY TUNES

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 LOONEY TUNES
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 OUT OF TIME
4 FIGHTING TEMPTATION
5 SCARY MOVIE 3
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS
7 STAR RUNNER
8 BABAE SA BREAKWATER

Malabon 288-0985/2575		**Cainta** 240-4661
MR. SUAVE	1	OUT OF TIME
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	STAR RUNNER
STAR RUNNER	3	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
OUT OF TIME	4	JEEPERS CREEPERS

Sta. Rosa Laguna (049)837-0907		**Lipa, Batangas** (043)757-3664/3 12-5870
COLD CREEK MANOR	1	COLD CREEK MANOR
LOONEY TUNES	2	LOONEY TUNES
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FIGHTING TEMPTATION	5	WRONG TURN

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SEX SCANDAL	2	OUT OF TIME
MR. SUAVE	3	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS	4	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
JEEPERS CREEPERS	5	STAR RUNNER
SCARY MOVIE 3	6	BABAE SA BREAKWATER

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GIGLI	4	LOONEY TUNES
LIBERATED	5	MR. SUAVE
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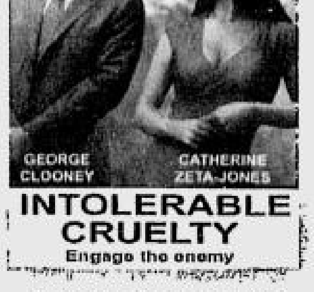

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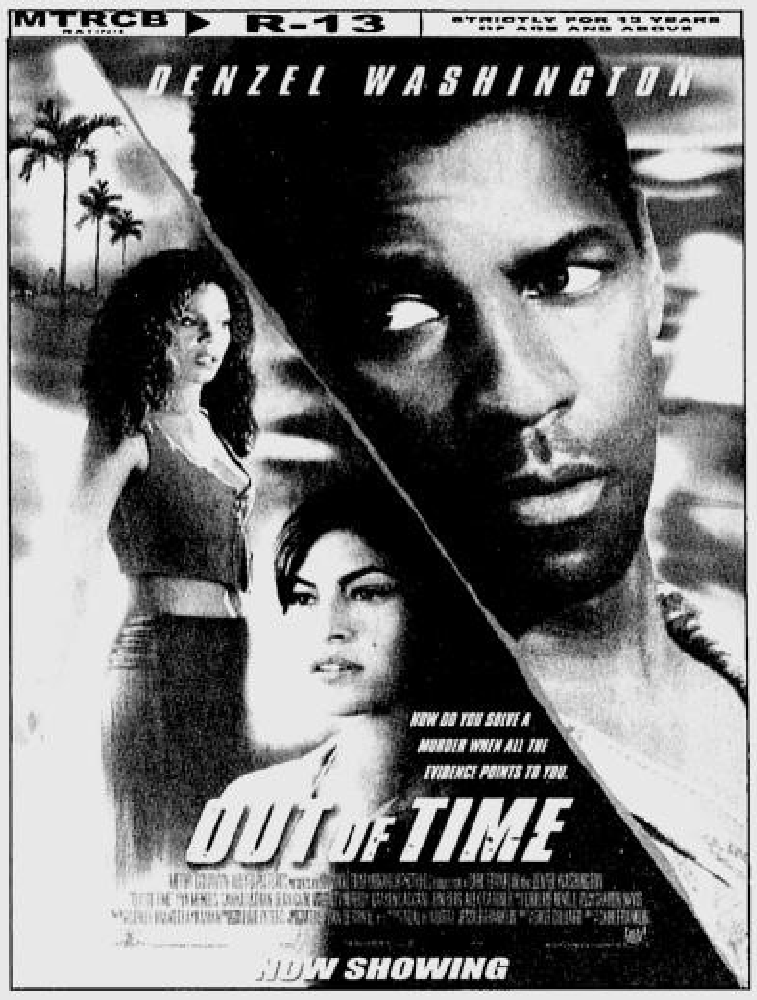
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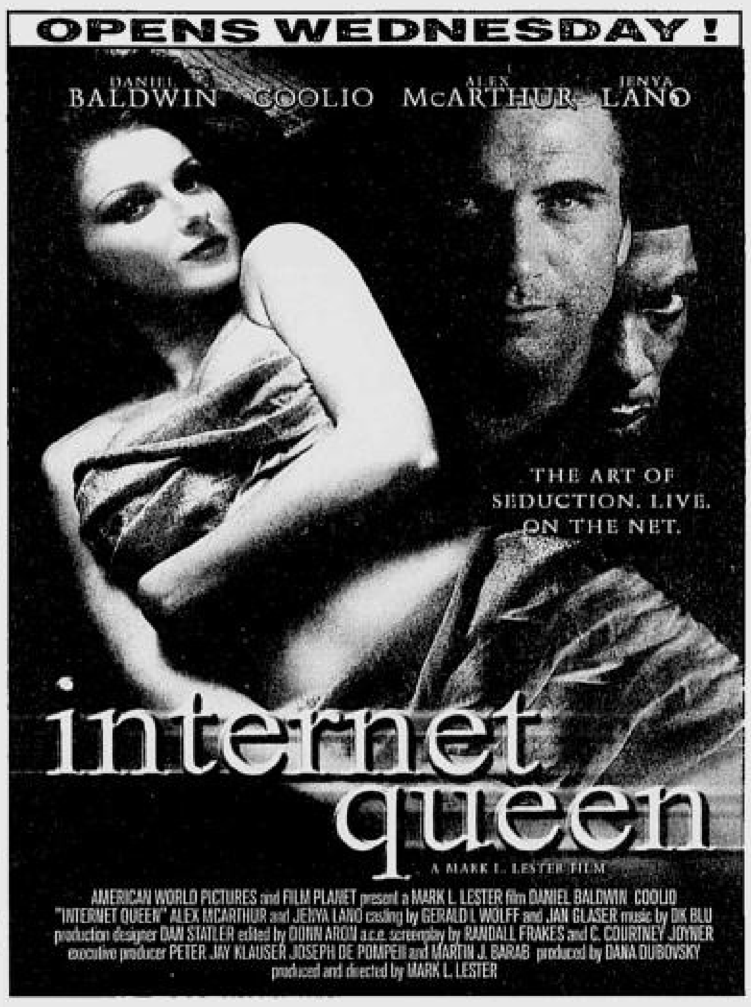

AMERICAN WORLD PICTURES and FILM PLANET present a MARK L. LESTER film DANIEL BALDWIN COOLIO "INTERNET QUEEN" ALEX MCARTHUR and JENYA LANO casting by GERALD I. WOLFF and JAN GLASER music by DK BLU production designer DAN STATLER edited by DONN ARON a.c.e. screenplay by RANDALL FRAKES and C. COURTNEY JOYNER executive producer PETER JAY KLAUSER JOSEPH DE POMPEII and MARTIN J. BARAB produced by DANA DUBOVSKY produced and directed by MARK L. LESTER

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JEEPERS CREEPERS **R13** 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	**FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS** **GP** 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:30	**LOONEY TUNES** **GP** 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Height of ingratitude

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FOR SOME weeks now, we have been dismayed to see **Nora Aunor** being treated shabbily in print and on TV. Tabloid articles and columns gossip about her being broke, doing drugs, running up debts at casinos and bingo parlors, etc.

On TV, one of her impersonators played a maid who "served" some other stars. And on a variety show, Nora was made to join a line of much lesser stars and starlets, and given just a few seconds to plug one of her shows.

This is a far cry from the glory days when Nora was given the respect and importance that was due her or the country's phenomenal first superstar. We shouldn't treat our veteran luminaries this way, especially if they've contributed as much to the entertainment industry as Nora has.

Sure, Nora may be past the apex of her stellar career, but must we kick, demean and disrespect her now that she's down? All the more reason that we should honor and boost her, so that she feels appreciated and motivated to chart a more disciplined and focused career path for herself in the future.

Personally, we're grateful to Nora not just for her standout singing and fine screen performances, but because she helped local show biz fans rise above their "colonial" preference for foreign-looking stars.

Pretty much all by her lonesome, petite, *kayumanggi*-complexioned Nora made viewers realize that brown was beautiful, talented, and praiseworthy.

Millions of non-mestizos empathized with her, and learned to be proud of their color and background.

After Nora had proved her point, other non-mestizo talents also became stars, and performances on TV and in the movies looked and felt more naturally Filipino, as a result.

So, it's really the height of ingratitude and thoughtlessness to insult and demean Nora in the media these days.

Let's all have a clearer sense of pop history, why don't we?

Sure, Nora is guilty of sins of commission and omission, has taken her success for granted, and has turned out to be her own worst enemy a number of times. But her talent is still there, she is now a more mature and disciplined performer, and she could come up with more memorable performances if we encourage her instead of carping and harping on her real and imagined mistakes.

It could be true that her behavior has taken an excessive, thoughtless turn again, but she needs help, rather than scathing disdain.

We should focus more on her work than on her private life.

She has a new film that will be directed by **Maryo de los Reyes**. Let's encourage her to do her best in it, and support it with our patronage when it hits our movie screens.

And, when she guests on TV, let's not demean her by making her join a line of other, lesser pluggers.

Let's give Nora the respect and importance she deserves, and has richly earned.

'Come to the Stable'

SINAG Tala invites you to a free Christmas concert, "Come to the Stable," at 1:30 p.m. on Dec. 14 at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Equitable PCI Bank, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

The concert features the Mandaluyong Children's Chorus with tenor **Nelson Caruncho**, pianist **Lea Capulong** and the kids of Ang Arko.

The Ang Arko Foundation runs a home for physically and mentally challenged children. Donations will be gratefully accepted.

Call Sinag Tala at 726-1297 or 0918-9468252.

PPO performance

THE PHILIPPINE Philharmonic Orchestra will perform at the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church at 8 p.m. on Dec. 15. Admission is free. Special guest is **Ding Mercado**, a Mt. Carmel parishioner.

The special musical presentation is supported by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, in cooperation with the Cultural Center of the Philippines. It is part of the PPO's outreach program to help develop music appreciation in different parts of the country.

'Totally Bublé'

MICHAEL Bublé's new album, "Totally Bublé," features seven new tracks from the film "Totally Blonde." The enhanced CD includes the cuts "That's How It Goes," "Love at First Sight" and "Anyone to Love."

Producer **David Foster** says, "Michael brings youthful energy to his music, tough and tender at the same time—like nothing else I've ever heard! The great thing is, he's tapped into a timeless repertoire (**Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Elvis, Rosemary Clooney**) that can last him 50 years. He's at the start of a very long career!"

DID YOU KNOW...

Assunta de Rossi recently received from her husband, Negros Occidental Rep. **Jules Ledesma** a diamond necklace reportedly worth $60,000 (P3.3 million) and a pair of diamond earrings worth $19,000 (P1.04 million), which the 20-year-old actress will wear during their church wedding scheduled on March 14, 2004 at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati. The jewels reportedly were bought at a recent Sotheby's auction in New York.

Shockpost brings cutting-edge technology to movies

SHOW STOPPER

ACTOR Bong Revilla eludes a bullet and a spear, and walks on water.

A mummy morphs into an underworld character.

These are the unforgettable scenes in the trailer of last year's "Agimat," arguably the only local movie so far that has the most number of effects done with cutting-edge technology.

That technology is now available at Shockpost, the latest playground for design, post- and visual effects artists.

Run by 20 something executives whose savvy spans film, broadcast, and Internet production, Shockpost has the dream tools for visual effects on film—Flame v.8 and Quantel Q Edit pro systems.

Shockpost brings high definition or digital film technology to the Philippines.

Known in the film industry as "video," HD is digital photographic imaging with the look, feel, and impact of 35mm film. This makes HD technology the future of post production.

HD can cut production budgets of full-length movies to almost half the price of current costs because the technology takes away the need for expensive tape formats. The process is also faster with HD than traditional film.

For example, if "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones" was done on film, the images taken must first be scanned, then converted into digital format, before the artists can execute the effects.

With digital technology, images are shot and kept in digital format throughout the production pipeline: editorial department, effects, mastering, and in special theaters, film-less digital projection.

Shockpost also has the latest online editing and special effects software called Flame on its extensive digital intermediate system of high-end Quantels.

Quantel Qedit Pro is a next generation multi-format editing and effects system that delivers 10-bit non-compressed quality and a high-end creative tool set into the mainstream finishing market.

With such hardware, the full capability for special effects generation of the Flame is put to optimum use at great speed.

Shockpost's high-speed Linux network also cuts down time.

Through this environment, several suites are inter-connected to allow Shockpost artists to work on the same project at the same time.

Now on its third year in the Philippines, Shockpost is also a creative boutique where artists can take part in conceptualization, design, and digital manipulation to complete the final product.

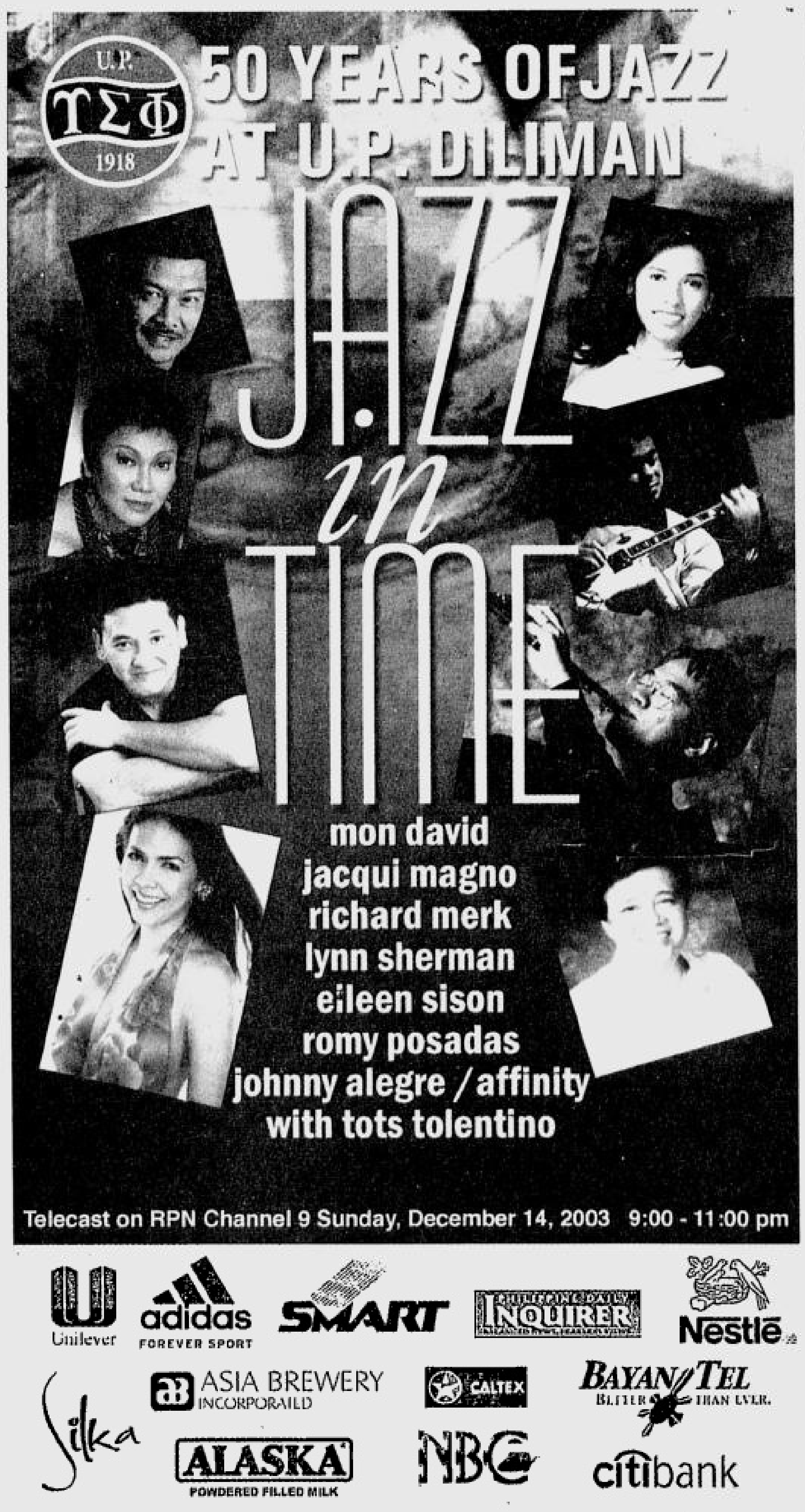
The team of Franklin Velarde, Pedring Lopez, Kiko Po, Dams de Guzman and Jun Umali is behind Shockpost.

Ladies' nights at Clubber's

WEDNESDAYS are ladies' nights at Clubber's Guide in Malate, Manila.

On those midweek nights, ladies get free entrance, drink-all-you-can of beer (except Corona) for P200 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., the chance to win P1,000 in the ledge-dancing match, and the chance to join a beer bomb drinking contest.

Clubber's Guide is at 610 Julio Nakpil St., Malate. Call 450-1592 for more information.



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Side A performs acoustic music in picnic-like setting at Clark

SHOW TIME

A CANOPY of centuries-old acacia trees hovers over you as you step onto a carpet of lush green grass. The cool December breeze blows gently as a glorious sunset lays out a feast for the senses.

It's nature at its best.

This scenario awaits viewers of Side A band's "Acoustic in the Woods," set at the Clearwater Country Club, Clark Field, Pampanga (only one-and-a-half hours from Manila) on Saturday, Dec. 13, 5 p.m. Gates open at 3 p.m.

The hitmaking band will dish out music to complement the laid-back, refreshing setting away from the maddening crowd. This means a generous dose of their hits with no frills, no musical artifice—just plain music that soothes the ears and calms the nerves.

You can even tour the resort and its facilities before and after the concert.

Seating is on first-come-first-served basis.

Ticket price includes complementary mats for a picnic-like setting. Food and beverage are available for sale at the venue.

Tickets at P800 and P600 each are available at Clearwater Club, Sax Productions, Blue Chef, Ala Creme (Angeles City and San Fernando branches), Apple Tree, Curved Corner, Video City branches, Roban Tarlac, Erik Cortez Savers (Tarlac), Gentext (Nepo Mall), Mr. Frosty, Bolandos, Rumpa, Shell Telebastagan and Coffee Overdose (AUF, Balibago and San Fernando).

For details, call 0917-9412810, (045) 322-1404 or (045) 888-2762.

The show, produced by Sax Production, is for the benefit of the Angeles City "Culiat" Jaycees.

Brendan Fraser sweet...

From page C7

thrown in jail.

"I was so touched because I hadn't even seen it," he says. "From that time on, I realized that things have changed and that this is the start of something different for me."

He decided to be an actor when he was 17. "I was living in Seattle, Washington then, and it was a thriving arts community. It has a wonderful theater, painters and artists. It had all the art influences just stuck right there in that corner of the country. It's a special place. It was there that I made a decision to train formally as an actor.

"I think as a kid it was something I did for fun, but I didn't take it seriously, which I don't think one should if one wants to be good at it. That was also a word of advice from Sir Ian McKellen, by the way."

He relates that since his father used to work as a travel agent—"or he might have worked for the CIA for all I know"—"I was always somewhere new every three or four years. So I had a somewhat adventurous, somewhat nomadic life."

He pauses before adding, "Maybe there's something in that kind of lifestyle that makes you constantly reinvent yourself or assimilate because you're always in a new place. You learn to adjust, empathize and sympathize. Maybe that's the reason I became an actor."

OPENS DECEMBER 10 IN SELECTED THEATERS ONLY

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NAKAKATAKOT

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MAGIC 89.9
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2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	2 THE GRUDGE	2 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20 11:30	2 OUT OF TIME
3 STAR RUNNER	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 OUT OF TIME 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30	REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 5 & 6, 12 & 13, 19 & 20; 9PM	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS 1:30 4:05 6:30 9:05 11:30	3 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
4 LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION	4 ADAM SANDLER'S 8 CRAZY NIGHTS		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:05 11:15	4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
	5 ELF		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 OUT OF TIME 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10 11:30	5 ELF
	6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY			
	7 THE FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS			

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6 JEEPERS CREEPERS-2
7 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

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4 THE SPY

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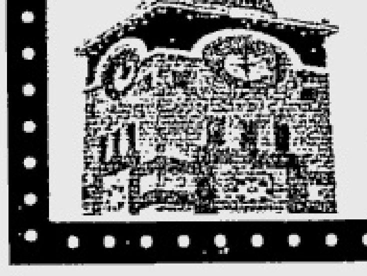

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Brendan Fraser sweet star, rare star

From page C8

tracts me to accept a role. I have been fortunate because I have been getting diverse projects. I've been lucky because I've been given a chance to do big budget films and smaller ones, funny and serious films."

In "Looney Tunes: Back in Action," directed by Joe Dante ("Gremlins"), Fraser also works with Jenna Elfman, Steve Martin, Heather Locklear, Timothy Dalton, Joan Cusack and of course, the Looney Tunes gang led by Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck.

"Who wouldn't be excited to work with Bugs and Daffy?" says Fraser. "I was the kid that you'd find Saturday morning with a bowl of Cheerios watching Looney Tunes cartoons. I think I learned comic timing from them. In fact, I think the Looney Tunes characters were the ones who introduced me to classical music, comedy timing, the art of joke setup and delivery. They were always in tune—pardon the pun—with what was going on in the day, politically and in pop culture."

Fraser was actually the filmmakers' first choice for the role of security guard and stuntman wannabe D.J. Drake, who develops a relationship with Daffy Duck when vice president for comedy Kate Houghton (Elfman) fires the latter.

Former balloon man

On the challenge of working with animation, Fraser explains, "I believed it was there! You believed it was there! You saw the movie! For as long as the actor believes that there's something there, the audience will, too. Actors are asked to draw from their imagination the best they could. Once they do, it becomes the truth."

ANIMATED with Daffy Duck

> 'Who wouldn't be excited to work with Bugs and Daffy?'

So when Fraser is holding Daffy Duck by his neck when Fraser escorts him out of the studio after being tossed out, the audience can really see Fraser accurately holding a duck by the neck. "Although sometimes we were working with puppets, sometimes we just worked with our imagination," he points out.

Asked whether he ever got fired in his life, Fraser confesses, "Oh, yeah. I've been fired. I was fired from a balloon company that I used to work for and I can't even remember now why I was fired. It was the Red Balloon Company in Seattle, Washington. They delivered these big bouquets of balloons. I guess there were cutbacks during that time in the balloon industry. If you ever want to know anything about balloons, ask me. I was really good at them."

Aside from being a former balloon guy, Fraser also used to be a parking attendant. "The weirdest job I ever had was cabling Christmas tree lights on a 150-foot tall sequoia tree on some campus in Seattle."

Acting for fun

He first realized he was a celebrity when he got off the plane and was waiting for a taxi at La Guardia airport when this little old lady walked up to him and said, "You were wonderful in that film!" And she was referring to his first Hollywood television film about a kid who was wrongly accused of murder and

BRENDAN/C6

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7
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Ali 2 BABAE SA BREAKWATER
Ali 3 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
Ali 4 OUT OF TIME
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Ali 6 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
Ali 7 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
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ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
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ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
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CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MR SUAVE
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CINEMA-4	AMERICAN PSYCHO
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(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
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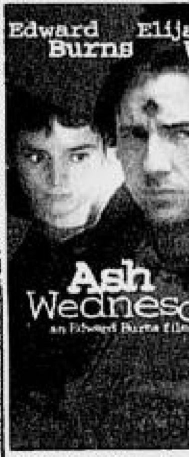
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA



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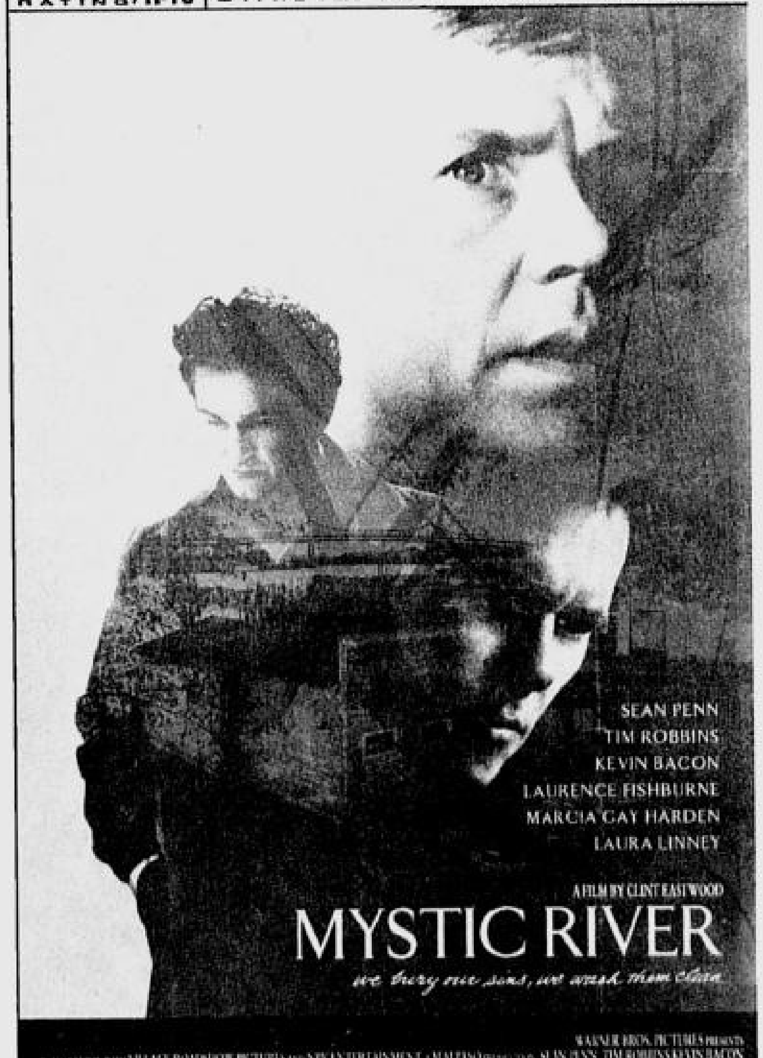
HUBBLE IS PLAYED BY: "FLYNN"
VOICE BY: "MATTHEW BRODERICK"
BREED: BORDER TERRIER
FLYNN WAS NOTHING BUT A WELL-LOVED FAMILY PET WHEN WRITER/DIRECTOR HOFFMAN MET HIM AS 'A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BREED' DURING PRE-PRODUCTION. NO MATTER HOW MANY BORDER TERRIERS THE DIRECTOR AUDITIONED, HE STILL COULD NOT FORGET FLYNN. IN THE END, HOFFMAN WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE FLYNN'S FAMILY TO LEND THEIR PET.
THE GREATER DANE
THE GREATER DANE IS PLAYED BY: "VALENTINO"
VOICE BY: "VANESSA REGRAVE"
BREED: GREAT DANE
LIKE HIS NAMESAKE VALENTINO, HAS MATINEE IDOL LOOKS THAT BELIE HIS SHY, ALMOST TIMID PERSONALITY. THE BLUE GREAT DANE HAD THE PERFECT SIZE TO PLAY THE RULER OF ALL DOGS IN THE UNIVERSE, BUT VALENTINO HAD NO SHOW BUSINESS EXPERIENCE AND FOUND THE FILM SET INTIMIDATING. IT TOOK WEEKS FOR THE TRAINERS TO SETTLE HIS NERVES.
GOOD BOY!
OPENS DEC. 10



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A FILM BY CLINT EASTWOOD
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we bury our sins, we wash them clean

ENTERTAINMEN

Brendan Fraser sweet star, rare star

EXCLUSIVE

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—"Oh yes, I remember my first trip to Manila. That was the time when I was promoting my 'George of the Jungle' movie. I was impressed with all those big giant posters of me. But why were my eyes drawn like these?"

An amused Brendan Fraser then pulls at the sides of his eyes with his fingers to make them look like slits.

Fraser ("The Mummy," "The Mummy Returns," "Encino Man"), dressed in a crisp blue shirt, a black jacket and pants this afternoon, is much handsomer and serious in person. One Manila publicist who closely worked with him during that Manila visit described him as "a kind soul. He has no star complex, no entourage."

With his hair brushed back, his face clean and well-shaved, his smell shower-clean fresh, and his body well-built, this versatile actor is worth admiring up close. We have seen other Hollywood male stars who arrive at their interviews with disheveled hair, wrinkled shirts, breath reeking of halitosis or cigar, faces looking like they just rolled out of bed and sleep-walked to the interview, with, to make matters worse, an "I-don't-really-wanna-be-here" attitude and the incessant use of foul language.

Friendly and humble

Portraying the ambitious security guard D.J. Drake in Warner Bros. Pictures' live action and animation comedy, "Looney Tunes: Back in Action," Fraser is a refreshing and pleasant sight. In the world of stars where being polite and neat seems to be passé, Fraser is a breath of fresh air.

He is also down-to-earth, warm and friendly. One of those rare actors who have experienced both box-office success and critical acclaim for his works, Fraser is also very humble.

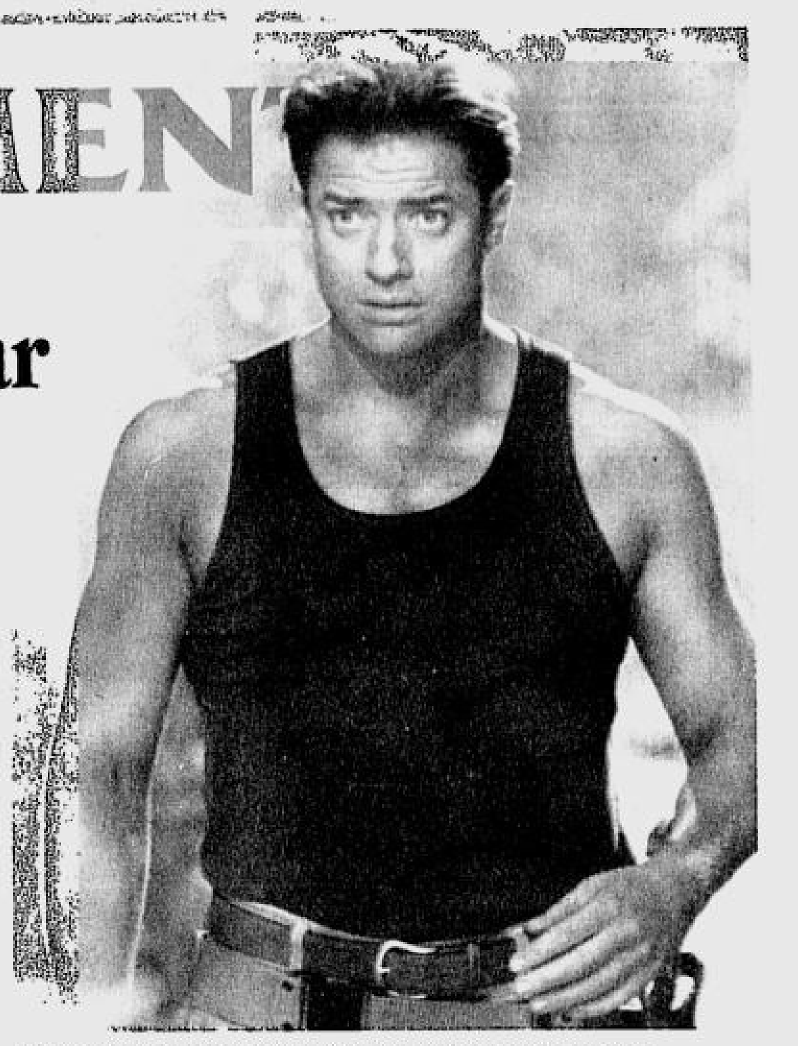
He impressed us in his critically acclaimed movie "Gods and Monsters" where his understated and thoughtful performance won the nod of critics. He also appeared with such notables as Oscar nominee Michael Caine in "The Quiet American," Christopher Walken and Sissy Spacek in "Blast from the Past," Shirley MacLaine in "Mrs. Winterbourne," and Sir Ian McKellen and Lynn Redgrave in "Gods and Monsters," to mention a few.

His talent is also displayed in his theatrical work—"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" in London and "Four Dogs and a Bone" in Los Angeles.

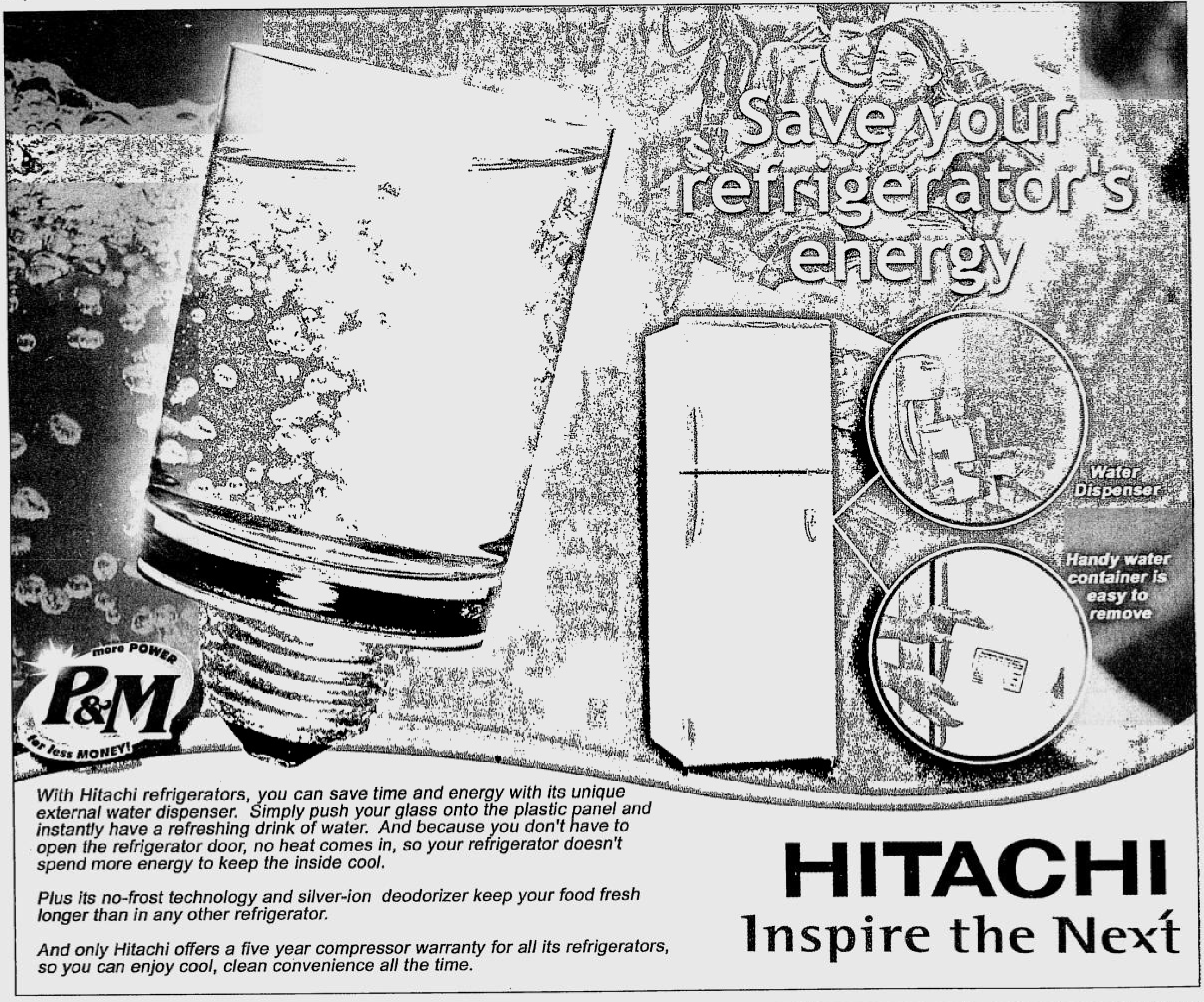
Bugs and Daffy

Asked how he chooses his roles, Fraser casually replies, during this interview at a five-star hotel, "Everything really depends on the material. A good script is one that really at-

BRENDAN/ C7



NOT QUITE LOONEY. Fraser is a star with no star complex.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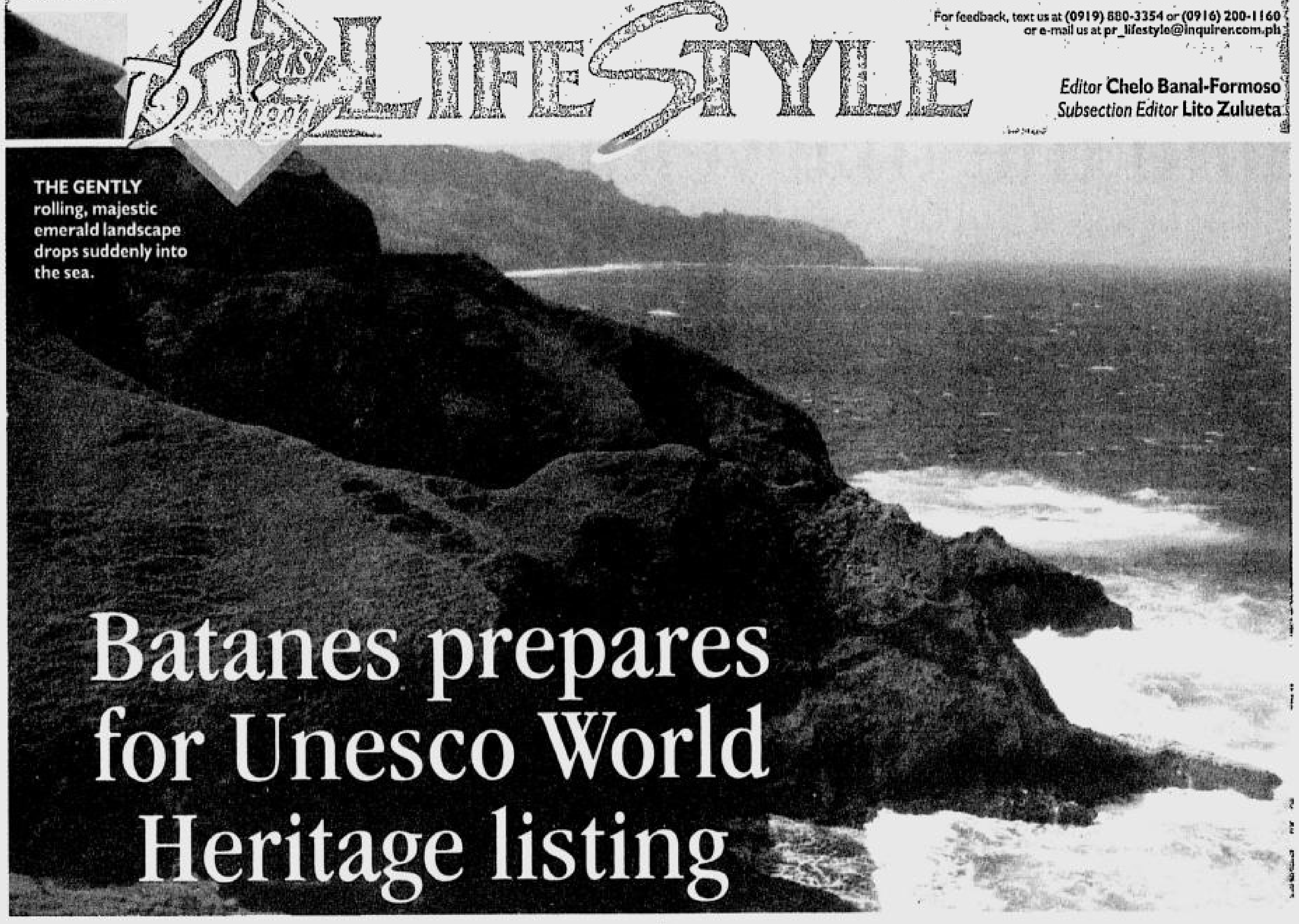


THE GENTLY rolling, majestic emerald landscape drops suddenly into the sea.

Batanes prepares for Unesco World Heritage listing

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

THE PREPARATION to nominate Batanes as the the sixth World Heritage site in the Philippines unofficially began in 1996 when the Batanes Heritage Foundation invited a team of local and foreign Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) representatives to visit the province.

The visit happened during a particularly stormy period. Although there was no typhoon at the time, strong wind and rain stranded the team for 10 days. In their protracted stay, the team learned that in Batanes wind and rain were often strong but there were good days which allowed travel all over the islands.

Before the extended stay was over, the Unesco team and National Museum experts Dr. Eusebio Dizon and Ray Santiago became convinced the entire province should be a World Heritage site.

Preparations began the following year when the National Commission for Culture and the Arts dispatched a team to survey cultural sites in the province and stepped up its support for an in-depth study of archaeological sites conducted by experts from the National Museum.

Stunning

The discoveries of the study were stunning. There were ruins of pre-Spanish colonial citadels (*ijang*) in many Batanes mountaintops, where pottery, human and animal bones, and other artifacts were unearthed.

Stone posts that once held down *cogon* dwellings against the strong wind battering *ijang* slopes were found. Boat-shaped stone markers in the shape of the *tataya*, the traditional wooden boat still used today, indicated graves of the early Ivatan.

The burial grounds, always facing the sea on slopes adjacent to the *ijang*, were testimony to the seafaring culture that believed the journey to the afterlife took place in a boat. The only other place that similar grave markers are found is in Scandinavia.

Batanes is a series of astonishing discoveries, one after the other.

Its archaeology speaks of an old civilization, probably one of the oldest in the Philippines, with roots stretching back to the Austronesians who migrated from Southern Taiwan 3,500 years ago. Batanes was the first stepping-stone in their migratory wave through the Philippines, reaching Indonesia and eventually Micronesia.

Unlike any other architecture in the Philippines, low-slung, strong and sturdy Ivatan architecture responds well to the severe environment. The lowland *bahay kubo* simply does not do for the harsh Batanes environment. To resist the elements, houses are clustered tightly in villages, their roofs aerodynamically deflecting the wind and resisting strong rain.

In pre-Spanish colonial days, houses were constructed completely of *cogon* and built on shelves cut below mountaintop *ijangs*. After the Spanish arrived, they moved villages down to coastal areas, taught the Ivatan how to build houses in stone, and laid out houses along straight, narrow streets. That is Ivatan architectural landscape as it survives to this day.

The Batanes landscape amazes. The rolling landscape is an emerald-green patchwork of hedgerows, a network of reeds planted in rows to form living fences that mark farm boundaries, prevent erosion and shield root crops from windburn.

It is a volcanic landscape with high cliffs that dramatically drop to the sea. Shores are covered with round rocks dating back possibly thousands of years when they were once thrown to the sea by volcanic eruptions.

THICK stone walls and *cogon* roofs withstand the winds and typhoons that have produced an architecture unlike any other in the Philippines.

Endemic

Many flora and fauna are found only in Batanes. *Voyavoy* and *arius* trees are endemic to the islands. Other animals, like the very endangered Ryuku flying fox, are found only in Batanes, Vietnam and Southern China.

The outstanding and totally unique qualities of Batanes are obvious. There is no other place like it in the world. We were solidly convinced. But the Ivatans could not see it.

They wanted to be like everyone else in the country, living in modern houses built of cement with galvanized iron roofs even if they were inappropriate to their climate. The rolling hills began to erode. The Ivatan took his beautiful landscape for granted.

In 2000, the campaign to make the Ivatan understand the unique significance of his natural and cultural heritage was launched by Rep. Florencio Abad and Gov. Vicente Gato. They saw that without the preservation of this heritage, the growth of the province could not be sustainable.

Since 2000, a series of consultations have been held with the Batanes community. The first meetings were conducted with a skeptical community that refused to believe this culture and landscape is the only one of its kind in the Philippines.

The Ivatans understandably wanted change, and the old stereotype for progress was what they looked for: the old must give way to the new.

Progress meant that the center of Basco should look like other generic Philippine towns, to the point of even importing the urban blight and pollution that those towns suffer from.

People were taking nature for granted. Natural formations and rocks were being mined for construction. Garbage was beginning to appear in the landscape. Cows were grazing on archaeological sites, disturbing artifacts and kicking around stones that marked boat-shaped burial grounds.

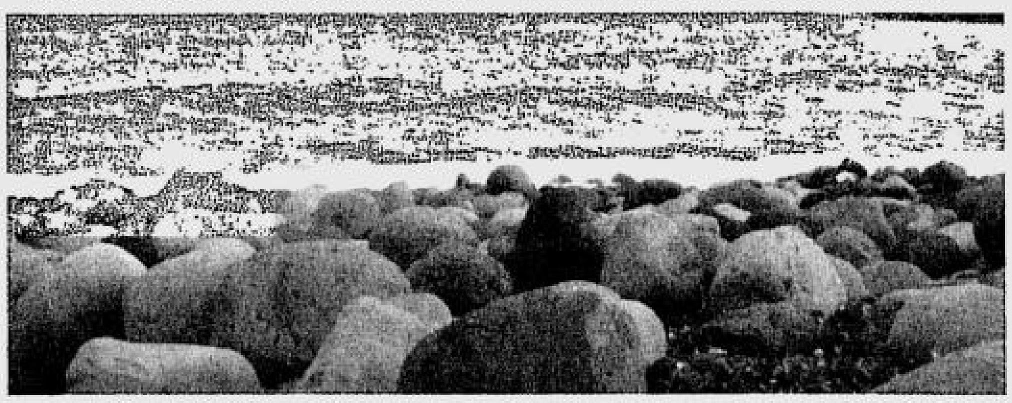
A team of heritage and environmental consultants held meetings with community leaders, convincing them that Batanes was, indeed, special and that its heritage should be protected.

Commitment

It has been an extremely long haul that has paid off. Last month, at a meeting that gathered officials from provincial to barangay levels, the Ivatan community committed to preserving their heritage.

They agreed on measures to prevent further decay of the traditional houses, banned the use of damaging cement for reconstruc-

BATANES/ D4



VALUGAN Beach in Batan Island is a surreal landscape of round rocks thrown during the ancient volcanic eruptions that formed the Batanes islands.

8 Dec
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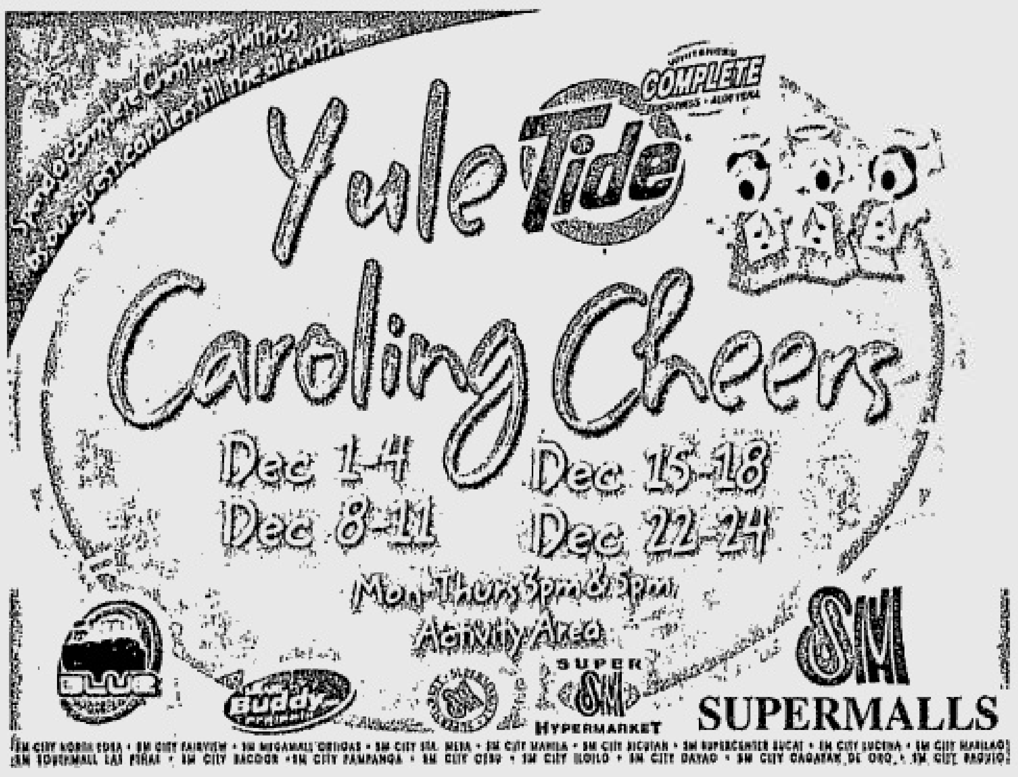
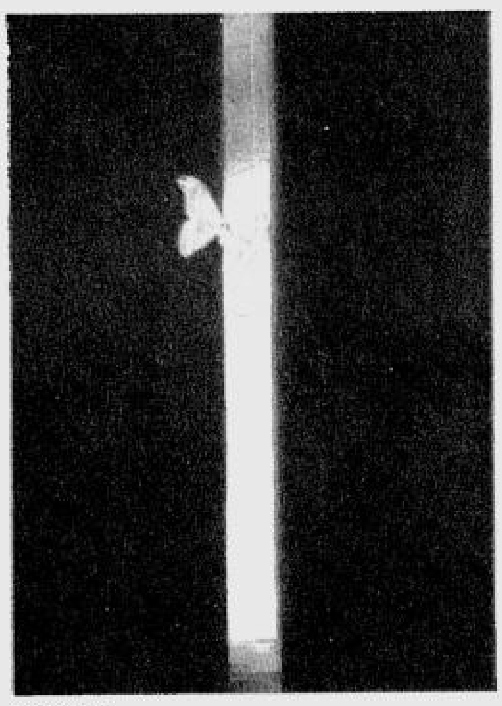
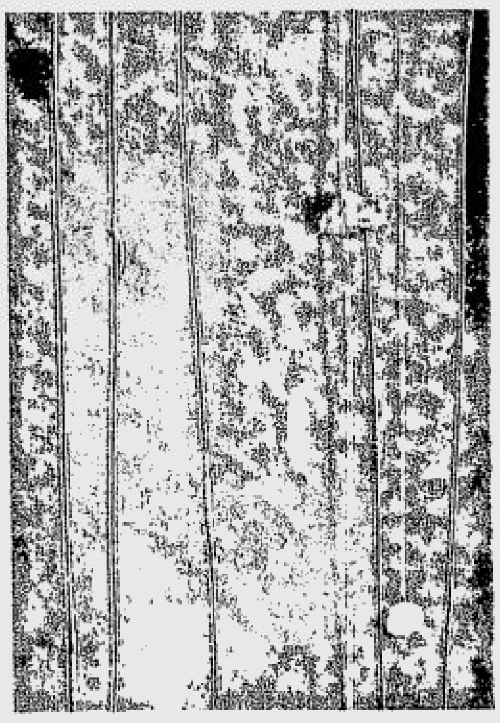


BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The art of the poetic and the marvelous


"DUSK"


"COMPOSITION on Violet-Gray"

By Constantino C. Tejero

SURREALISM has become somewhat of a cliché, abetted by commercial ads and film, particularly the onslaught of MTV. However, it is not yet a spent force.

Many artists still prefer to express their dreams and fantasia if not through abstraction then through surrealism (whether in frottage, assemblage or superrealism). One such artist is Lina Llaguno Ciani.

Ciani's latest fantastical imagery she unfolds in the exhibit "Strings and Things," until Dec. 15 in Galleria Duemila at Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall.

Here are 11 pieces in oil on canvas, with some done in the hyperrealist mode and others rendered so as to look as if done in pastel. Each piece contains the Surrealist ideal of the poetic and the marvelous.

The images are exquisitely drawn: strings, seashells, a leaf, a songbird, an African daisy, eggs, pins, ants, a leafless tree, a butterfly, ruin of a tower. These are set against a wash or plane of muted monochrome of gray, white, plum, burnt orange or the palest green.

They are landscapes and still lifes that look more like studies in composition, perspective, color and structure, than expressions of the workings of the artist's subconscious. Many of the titles are self-explanatory: "Composition on White," "Composition on Mint-Green," "Composition on Payne Gray," "Composition on Violet-Gray" and "Possibly Lavender."

The juxtaposition of hues is of such loveliness that a viewer is bound to take a breath, for instance, upon seeing the rift of turquoise against planes of gray in "Songbird" No. 2. Or the burnt orange, ochre and white of "Nest."

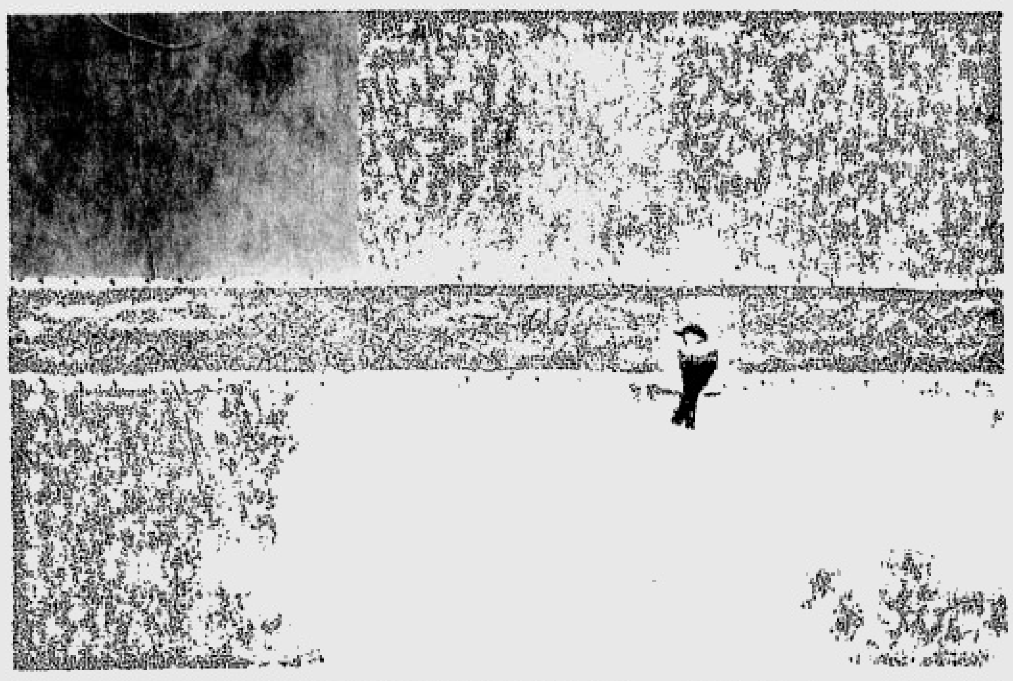
The loveliest is "Dusk." This one depicts a plane of dark reddish-brown with a rift of yellow and orange splitting the middle. A butterfly perches on an edge, struck by a shaft of light.

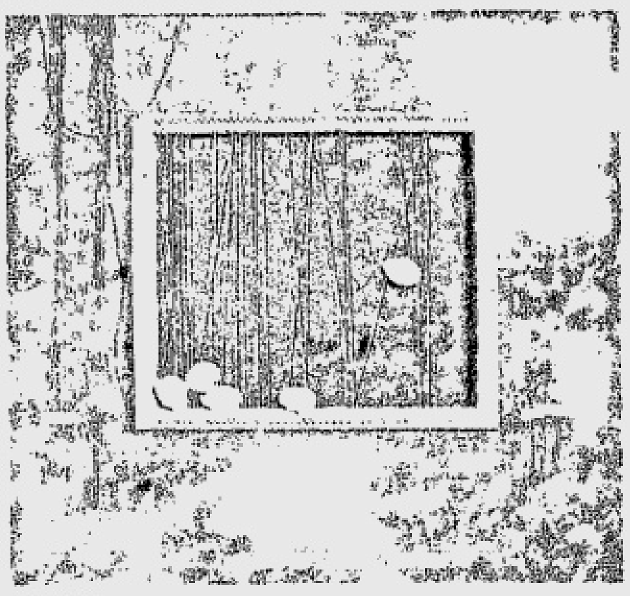
Most are arrangements of shells, eggs and strings, which the artist explains thus: "Like life on a string—a thin existential platform which can hold or break. Like the wish to bind and preserve, to keep life's pieces together. Or like memories, as a messy tangle of thread, inextricable but vivid."

This sense of the fragility of things is most pronounced where the egg-and-string symbolism is used. These objects are positioned in contrast to those that connote "massiveness and structural stability," such as stone walls, an ancient tree ("Possibly Lavender"), a ruined fortress ("Memory Compost").

"The string has been one of the elements in my works for as long as I can remember," says the artist. And she intimates that "the fragile strength of strings may be reflective of the fleetingness of youth and life."

"SONGBIRD" No. 2



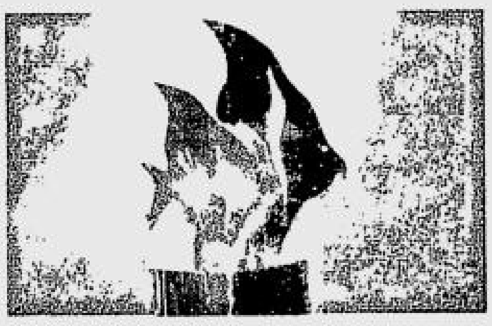

"NEST"

Ciani displayed the same surrealist bent in her previous exhibit "Umbrella Games," held in the same gallery last year. That one could have been what surrealist poet Lautréamont describes as "beautiful as the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table,"

A graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts, Ciani took up further studies at Accademia delle Belle Arti in Perugia. She is now based in Italy, where she has a studio overlooking a lake in Trevignano Romano.

Time and again she returns to her home country, where she maintains a studio in Sogod, Bacacay, facing the expanse of Pacific Ocean.

Waterworld in stainless steel and acrylic


"TUTELAGE"

ULYSSES Ernest Veloso turns various mediums, styles and genres malleable in his hand.

In his early paintings, the hyperrealistic images of the sky and landscapes of dripping clouds, leaves and flowers floating in midair became treatises in surrealism.

Now, that superrealism approaches a different plane, as can be seen in the water series in acrylic on canvas in the exhibit "Steel Waters," until Dec. 15 in Art Elements Asian Gallery at Artwalk, 4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall.

The eight pieces titled "Nostalgia under Presssure" invariably depict underwater blueness with a haze of white light, with only the slightest variations in the positioning of color tones. It is still hyperrealistic but presented in an abstract layout, so that the whole series looks like abstraction in blue (cobalt, ultramarine, royal thalo, phtalocyanine blue, International Klein Blue).

Devoid of extraneous images and distracting hues, the blue monochrome mesmerizes the mind into deep meditation. This would be a visual equivalent to a mantra.

Only the large work "Devil's Point," which comes as a pair of canvases vertically mounted side by side, has any hint of other colors, but even then, the brilliant hues are confined to one edge of the canvas. The artwork depicts a small silhouette of a deep-sea diver afloat on a wash of blue, and a partial view of the drop of an abyss swirling with strange blooms of orange, red, yellow, green.

Fanciful pieces

Accomplished though his paintings are, Veloso says he'd rather be known more as a sculptor.

He has done resin, wrought iron, concrete, glass, wood, stone, and in this exhibit stainless steel. He has done sculpture in the round, and here it's metal cutout (similar to Sandra Torrijos' wood cutout, with the difference that metal's malleable, thus can be more freely shaped).

These are 13 decorative pieces depicting fishes, turtles, frog, human figures in diver's suits. They look fanciful, captured in action, as it were, and frozen in gleaming metal. The cold flash of stainless-steel sheets excites the eyes.

Veloso has a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts, major in Painting, from University of the Philippines, where he's now completing his master's. He had been mentored by National Artist for Sculpture Napoleon Abueva.

Favorite artists include Jean Arp, Henry Moore, Brancusi, Agnes Arellano, Dan Raralio, Nestor Vinluan.

Aside from being sculptor and painter, Veloso is also an installation artist, essayist, poster maker, art director, set designer, photographer, muralist (of restaurants, stage productions), landscape architect (amphitheater by the sea, golf course), interior designer (gym, display window), furniture designer (functional sculpture), curator (gallery). He is truly a jack-of-all-arts.

Art for nature

And not only that, the 29-year-old man is also a mountaineer, swimming instructor, rescue diver, dive master, environmentalist, and, unbelievably, even a fruit and vegetable carver.

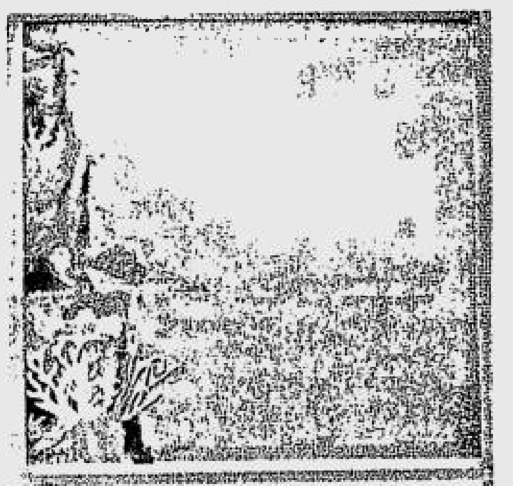
That's why nature means so much to him. And so he has formed this philosophy of water: "Fluid, infinite and dynamic, water represents the energy of life. Water makes up the most basic constitution of man and the environment, and its conservation is the calling of this artist."

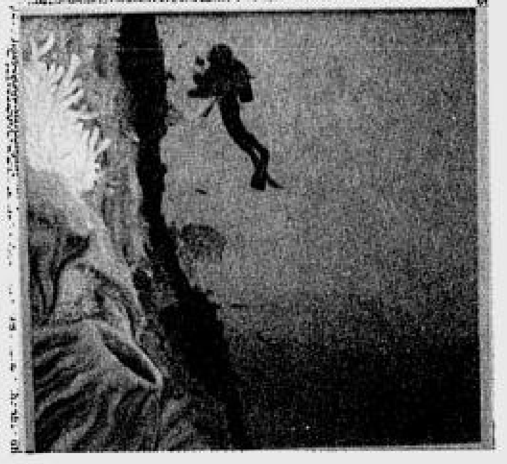
Of deep-sea diving, he says: "It is the art of celebrating life. It is a microcosm of life's simple pleasures, such as journey, adventure, technology, discovery, relationships. It is the purest experience, wherein the ultimate test of trust and confidence surrenders to both man and nature."

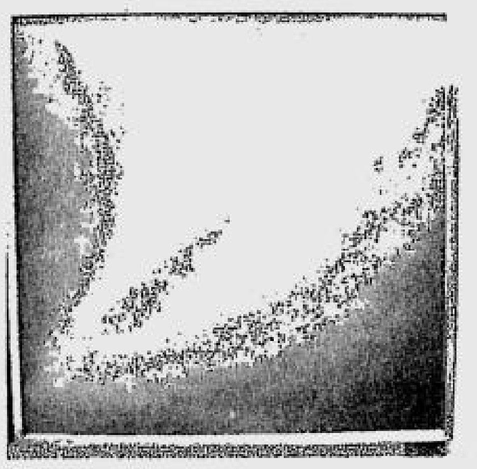
Thus, this exhibit. Part of the proceeds of the artworks will go to the conservation of dive sites in northern Philippines and an artificial-reef project headed by Veloso himself in cooperation with the Subic Wreck Divers Association of the Philippines.

We don't know if this young man is just fulfilling his destiny by name association, but we can't fail to recall the watery wanderings of the Greek hero Ulysses.

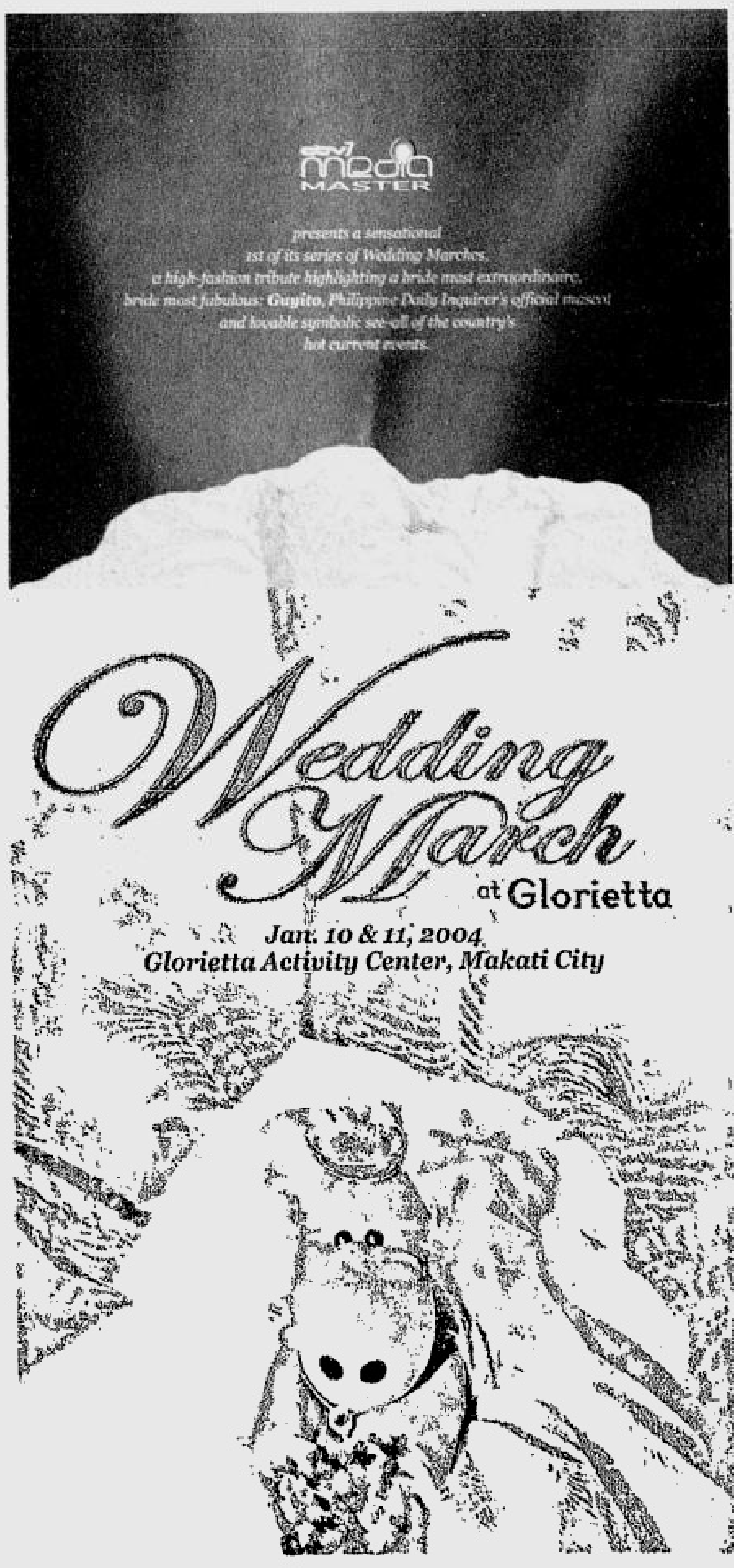
Constantino C. Tejero




"DEVIL'S Point"


"NOSTALGIA under Pressure"

"HARMONY"



presents a sensational 1st of its series of Wedding Marches, a high-fashion tribute highlighting a bride most extraordinaire, bride most fabulous: **Guyito**, Philippine Daily Inquirer's official mascot and loveable symbolic see-all of the country's hot current events.

Wedding March at Glorietta

Jan. 10 & 11, 2004
Glorietta Activity Center, Makati City

FEATURING

- **On Exhibit** Guyito in Haute Couture bridal gowns by 10 of the Philippines' top fashion designers: Ben Farrales, Inno Sotto, Patis Tesoro, Eddie Baddeo, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Frederick Peralta, Jojie Lloren, Bobby Novenario and Eric Pineda
- **Dress-Up Guyito Wedding March Contest** In cooperation with Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the major activities of this event is this competition to dress up Guyito, PDI's official mascot. Please see contest mechanics below.
- **Accoustic Night** A free concert featuring: Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos, Nyoy Volante and Nina
- **Raffle Draws** Open to suppliers/exhibitors and couples/guests
- **Wedding & Trade Fair Exhibit** Showcasing the country's most prominent establishments

Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest Mechanics:

1. The contest is open to all aspiring amateur designers 18 years old and above.
2. One pair of Guyito doll entitles a contestant to one entry form. The dolls must be purchased by the contestant starting Dec. 1 to Dec. 26, 2003 from the Philippine Daily Inquirer main office at:
   Philippine Daily Inquirer Building
   Don Chino Roces Avenue
   cor Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
   Each pair costs P350.00. A contestant may submit as many entries as he/she wants.
3. The contest theme is "Guyito's Wedding March". A contestant is tasked to dress up the doll pair in wedding ensembles (as bride and groom) of his/her own design. No perimeters shall be set with the design.
4. Criteria for judging will be based on the following: Relevance to Theme (30%), Originality (30%) and Creativity (40%). Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbr7 Media Master will be present during the judging of the contest.
5. Deadline for submission of entries is on Dec. 29, 2003, 9am to 6pm at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Head Office Marketing Department. Look for [illegible]
6. Judging date will be on January 5, 2004 at Philippine Daily Inquirer main office in Don Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo), corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City at 2pm. A DTI representative shall be invited to witness the selection of the winners.
7. Winners will be notified thru phone, registered mail and will also be published in Philippine Daily Inquirer.
8. All winning entries shall automatically become the exclusive property of PDI and may be used, copied, reproduced into any size or medium for exhibition, advertising, promotion, or similar purposes. All non-winning entries will be returned to the contestants after the awarding ceremonies.
9. PDI reserves and safeguards all intellectual property rights.
10. Prizes as follows:
    1st prize : P15,000 cash
    2nd prize : P10,000 cash
    3rd prize : P5,000 cash
    All cash prizes are tax free.
11. All winning entries will be displayed during the Wedding March at Glorietta in Makati City on Jan. 10, 2004. Awarding will be done on Jan. 10, 2004 at 7pm. Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbr7 Media Master will be present during the awarding.
12. Winners must present any valid I.D. (driver's license, passport, or any I.D. with picture) when claiming the prize.
13. The decision of the Board of Judges of the Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest contest is final and unappealable with the concurrence of the DTI.
14. Employees of PDI, cbr7 Media Master, their advertising agency, dealers, all participating outlets and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promotion.
15. Only entries received until Dec. 29, 2003 are qualified for the contest. A participant can send more than one entry but can only win once.
16. PDI and cbr7 Media Master reserve the right to publish or display any entry, winning or non-winning, for promotional purposes, without permission or payment of any kind to the owner of the Guyito doll.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-641, Series of 2003

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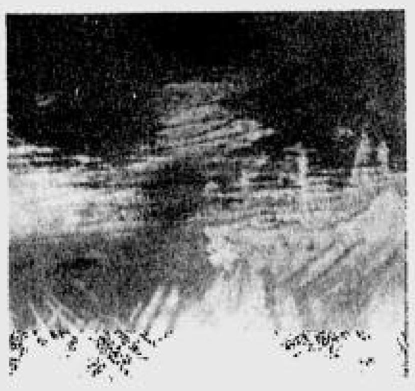
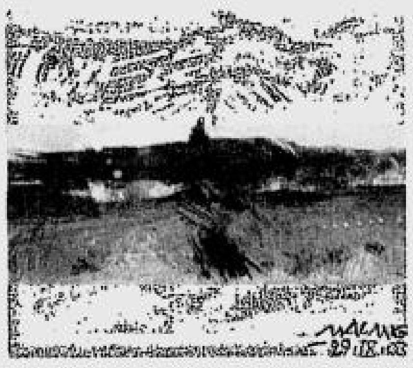
SATURDAY Group's board of directors: (standing, from left) Malang, Merci Melchor, Migs Villanueva, Magoo Valencia, Lydia Velasco; (front row) Cris Cruz and Buds Convocar

Malang at West





"CITY of our God"

VISUAL ARTS

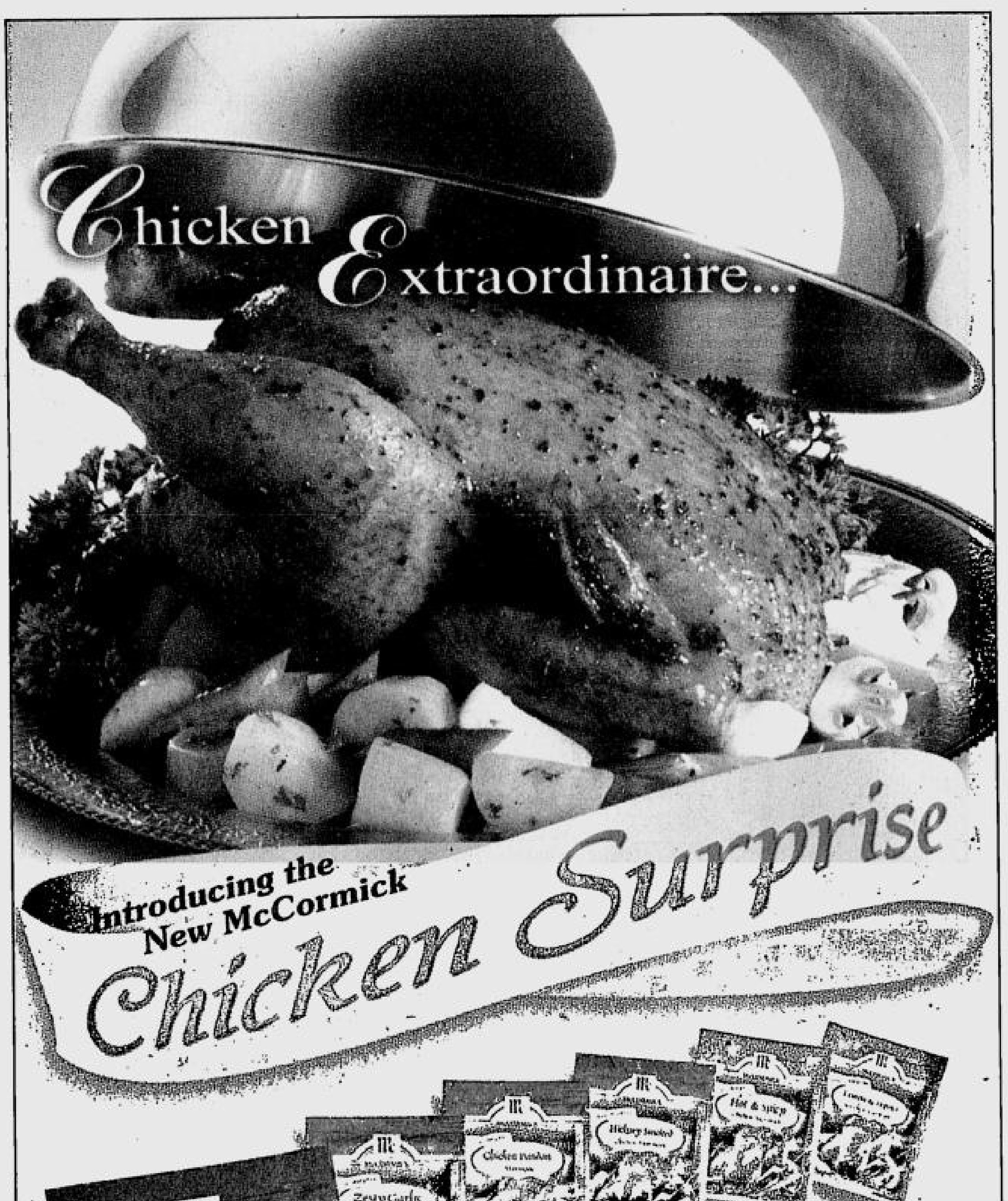
WEST GALLERY mounts Mauro Malang Santos' "Sacred Landscape" on Dec. 11-31 at SM Megamall. The exhibit features 31 landscapes, all done in goauche on paper. Call 6341284.

KULAY Diwa Art Galleries presents "Buklod," an annual year-end show which is a preview of what the art house's 25 artists hope to achieve in the years ahead.
Participating artists are Alexander Abon, Renato Barja, Mark Barretto, Roberto Besana, Leslie de Chavez, Marc Cosico, Reynold de la Cruz, Carlo Gabuco, Carlo Gernale, Christopher Guillergan, Michael Lagos, Kurt Lluch, Joseph Lofranco, Mark Magugat, Lea Padilla, Ikoy Ricio, Raoul Rodriguez, Don Salubayba, CJ Tanedo, Kitty Taniguchi, Maria Taniguchi, Juanito Torres, Clairelynn Uy, Ian Victoriano and Christopher Zamora.
The exhibit runs Dec. 1-Jan. 20, 2004. Kulay Diwa is at 25 Lopez Ave., Lopez Village, Sucat, Parañaque.

THE GALLERY, SSS Collection of Arts and Antiques, mounts an exhibit of Five Seasons, a group of women painters, until Dec. 24 at the SSS Building, East Avenue, QC.
Marie Aganon, Serena Borras, Isabelita Maderazo, Rich Pijuan and Mildred Varela, who are all members of the Art Discovery and Learning Foundation, Inc., present paintings and crafts, which reflect their preoccupations.

THE DRAWING Room features Susanito Sarnate's "Tianda" until Dec. 18 at Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Ave., Makati. The exhibit showcases sculptures in terra cotta and pays homage to the vendors of various wares, food and fruits in La Carlota City, Negros Occidental.

MALANG/ D4



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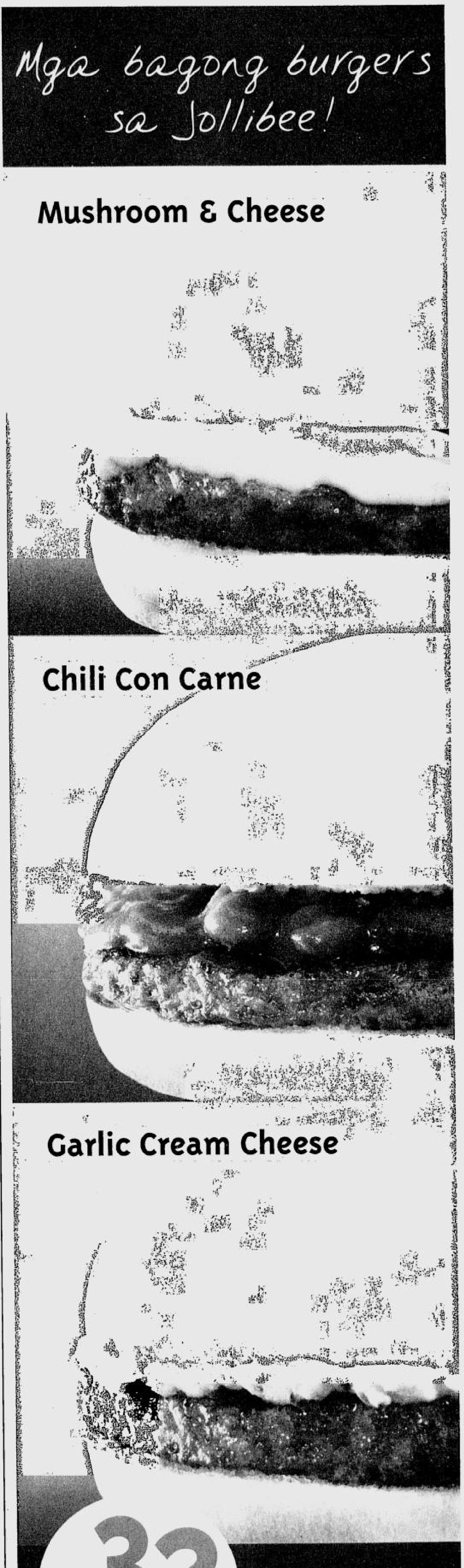

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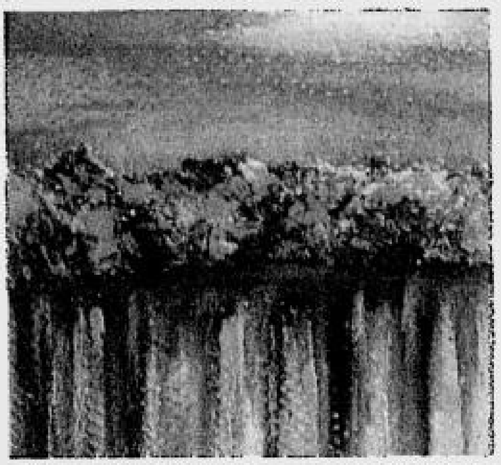
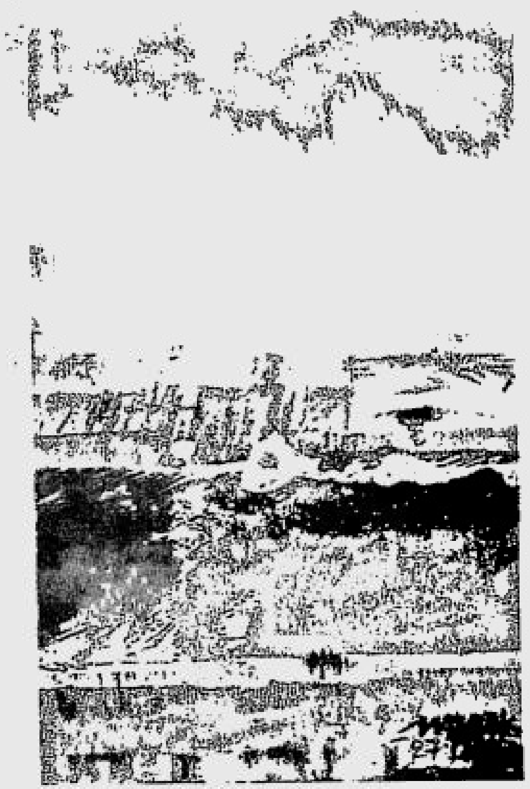


SMALL BEGINNINGS. Dan Lerma's first solo exhibit.



"MOUNTAIN of Refuge"

Malang at West

From page D3

GALERIA de las Islas showcases Grupong Atelier's "Art in Motion" on Dec. 13-Jan. 4, 2004 at the 3/L of Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila.
Artists include Chiney Carpio, Indie de la Cruz, Hermie del Rosario, Noel Escultura, Angelo Paulo Faustino, Dodie Santos Viola-Faustino, Tina Ocampo-Mercado, Marylou San Agustin-Myers, Romy Salao and Trio Tamayo.

THE PHILIPPINE Association of Printmakers (PAP) recently concluded its 2003 outreach program in bringing printmaking to as many Filipinos in 10 destinations in the country. As a result of the successful traveling workshops and exhibitions, the PAP will hold a printmaking competition this month at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Call 8971905.

SALVADOR Convocar has been appointed president of the Saturday Group. He presided at the group's planning sessions held recently at Ginger Hill in Matabungkay.
The group's plans for 2004 include its 36th anniversary exhibit in July; fundraising projects for its scholarship and outreach program; year-round schedule of exhibits; art symposia, seminars, workshops and sketching sessions.

PHYSICIAN-ARTIST Dante V. Lerma is holding his first solo exhibit, "Small Beginnings," at University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences. The show consists of miniatures on various subjects rendered in oil pastel and acrylic.
Lerma won a prize in the 11th World Heritage Series Postal Design Contest in Tokyo, Japan. Part of the proceeds will benefit the feeding program for malnourished children of the St. Martin de Porres Community Sociomedical Center, Sapang Palay, Bulacan.
The show runs until Dec. 12. Call the UST Museum, 7811815. E-mail museum@ust.edu.ph.

ARTIST Onglepho with guests of honor Leonicio Yee Jr., Gerland Dee (representing his brother Gilbert Dee Jr.), Johnlu Koa, Dr. Jason Letran and Johnny Chua

Onglepho opens 23rd solo

JAMES Onglepho opened his 233rd one-man art exhibit on Nov. 26, in Asia Art Gallery at 4/L, ARt Plaza, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Edsa, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit was graced by artist-friends, art collectors and relatives.

JESSIE Tan, Carol Ong and the artist

Batanes prepares for Unesco . . .

From page D1

tion and adopted a return to the old lime technology. They agreed to protect archaeological sites.

They passed province-wide plans for effective waste management, measures to curb the use of plastic wrappers and bags, and for the first time, instituted a risk and disaster-management plan.

Most important, they agreed on a management plan that oversees the maintenance of both natural and cultural properties in the province to be enforced jointly by a provincial technical working group and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The consultants produced a complete set of computer-generated Geographic Information System maps of the entire province. The maps are an inventory listing and classifying each natural, archaeological, cultural and architectural area.

A team of architects from University of the Philippines studied and inventoried Ivatan houses and prepared a manual to guide future repairs.

All the mechanisms to preserve Batanes are in place. What makes this outstanding is that the mechanism has been determined by the Ivatans themselves. With such strong community cooperation, the system is bound to be successful.

World Heritage inscription for Batanes should really be a reward for a well-done job in preserving their heritage.

The Heritage Conservation Society has published a handsome desk calendar for 2004 that features archival photos and short historical data on 12 well-known Philippine churches written by respected scholars. Proceeds will fund HCS projects for 2004. Call the HCS Secretariat at 5222497 and 5212239.

E-mail your comments and feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com

Coffee with Malang.
Tea with Baldemor.
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**the Malang painting has been resized in the photo*

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A sweetly subversive show

By Gibbs Cadiz

"[HE'S] not exactly an actor whom most would have picked to headline a musical comedy, but he has always shown up on time and in shape for his roles. You have to admire a guy this greasy, and, man, does he slide. He may be part mollusk; he's so squishy and oozy."

Stephen Hunter of the Washington Post wrote that to describe the Golden Globe-winning performance of Richard Gere in "Chicago" (the movie), but he might as well have been describing Michael De Mesa in "Urinetown," the new musical from Atlantis Productions which opened Dec. 5 at the Carlos P. Romulo auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati City.

De Mesa, known more for his gritty, bad-boy persona on screen and off (even his breakthrough theatrical role as tough-and-tender Collins in "Rent" seemed a natural extension of his edgy movie rep), completely transforms before our eyes to play the ruthlessly charming tycoon Caldwell B. Cladwell in Bobby Garcia's incarnation of the Tony award-winning musical.

In top hat and tapered coat, shimmying to and fro in his big song-and-dance moment so soon after Scene 1, De Mesa looks spectacular—a true star lit large on stage.

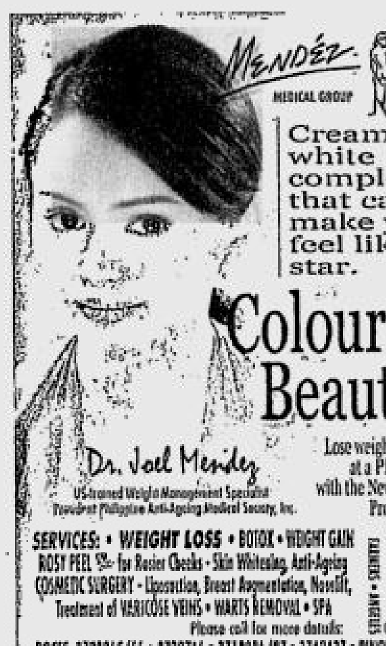
He has never been this trim, this dapper and elegant—so much so that when he begins swinging his legs, flicking his fingers and oozing his way into this lilting number, Gere's silky, ingratiating charm in that movie (remember him hoofing and jabbing playfully with a chair in "Razzle Dazzle"?) comes immediately to mind.

"Urinetown," with music and lyrics by Greg Kotis and Mark Hollman, is full of similar moments that channel memories and sensations from other shows, none of them decidedly coincidental. It turns out to be a sweetly subversive production that sends up everything from its scandalous title to iconic moments from other Broadway musicals.

De Mesa's sinewy number is only the first to allude—strictly tongue in cheek, of course—to a familiar scene from another production.

The Act 1 finale parodies the marching revolutionaries of "Les Miserables"; the "Follow Your Heart" duet between young lovers Bobby Strong (a handsome but vocally strained Noel Rayos) and Cladwell's daughter Hope (Cathy Azanza, lovely voice, willowy frame) recalls the spare, waltzy ballads of Stephen Sondheim; the frenetic "Snuff That Girl" scene in Act 2, performed with impressive brio by the ensemble, mimics the finger-snapping syncopation and energy of The Jets'

A SWEETLY/E4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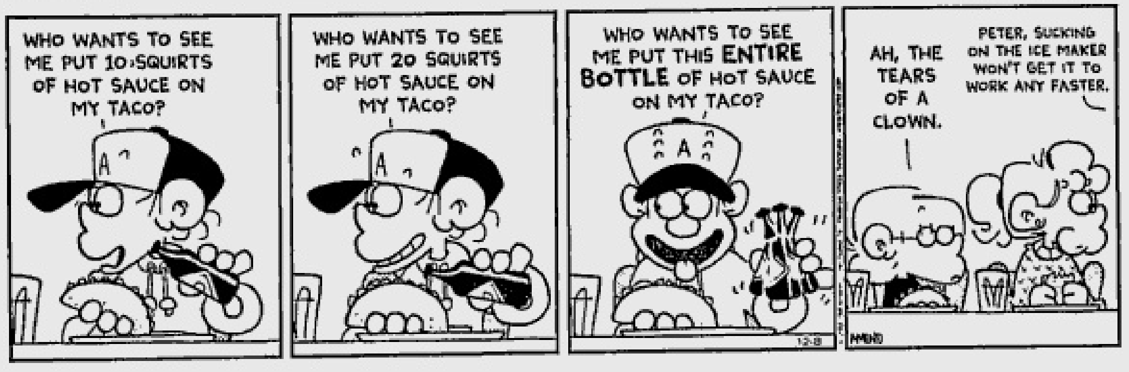
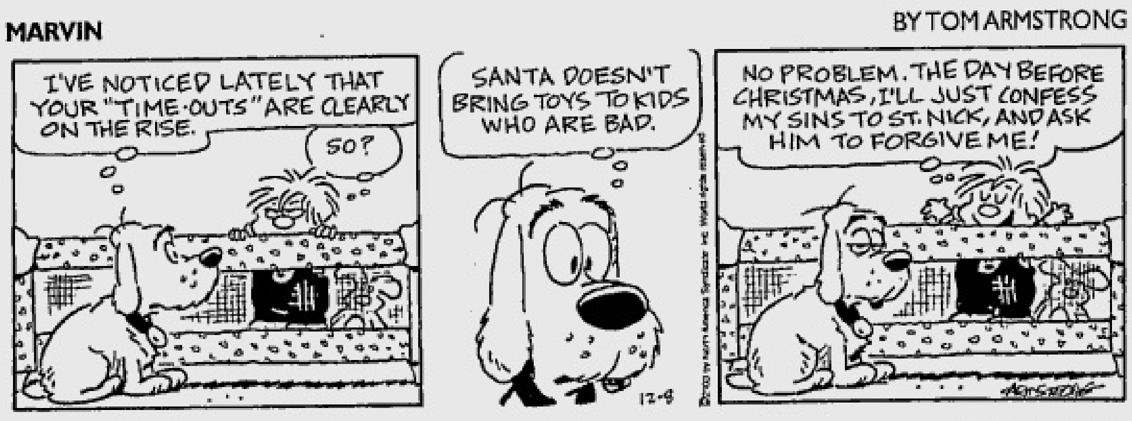

WHO WANTS TO SEE ME PUT 10 SQUIRTS OF HOT SAUCE ON MY TACO?
WHO WANTS TO SEE ME PUT 20 SQUIRTS OF HOT SAUCE ON MY TACO?
WHO WANTS TO SEE ME PUT THIS ENTIRE BOTTLE OF HOT SAUCE ON MY TACO?
AH, THE TEARS OF A CLOWN.
PETER, SUCKING ON THE ICE MAKER WON'T GET IT TO WORK ANY FASTER.
12-8
AMEND

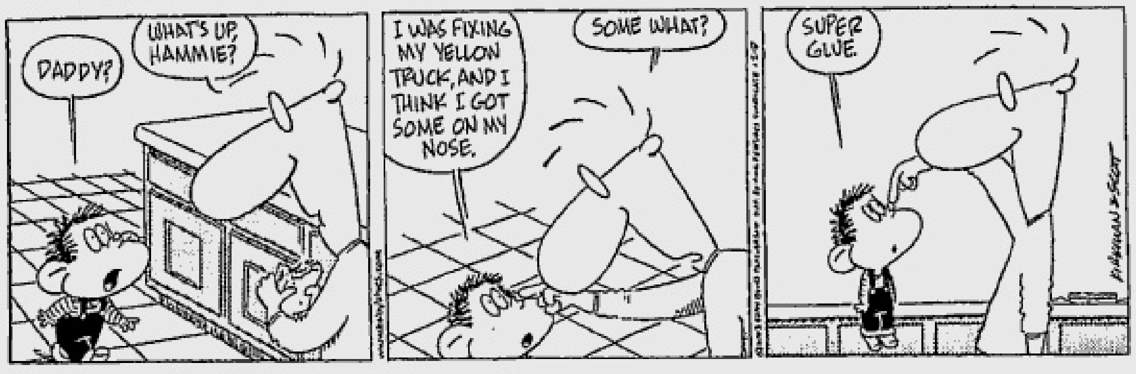
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'VE NOTICED LATELY THAT YOUR "TIME-OUTS" ARE CLEARLY ON THE RISE.
SO?
SANTA DOESN'T BRING TOYS TO KIDS WHO ARE BAD.
NO PROBLEM. THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS, I'LL JUST CONFESS MY SINS TO ST. NICK, AND ASK HIM TO FORGIVE ME!
12-8
ARMSTRONG

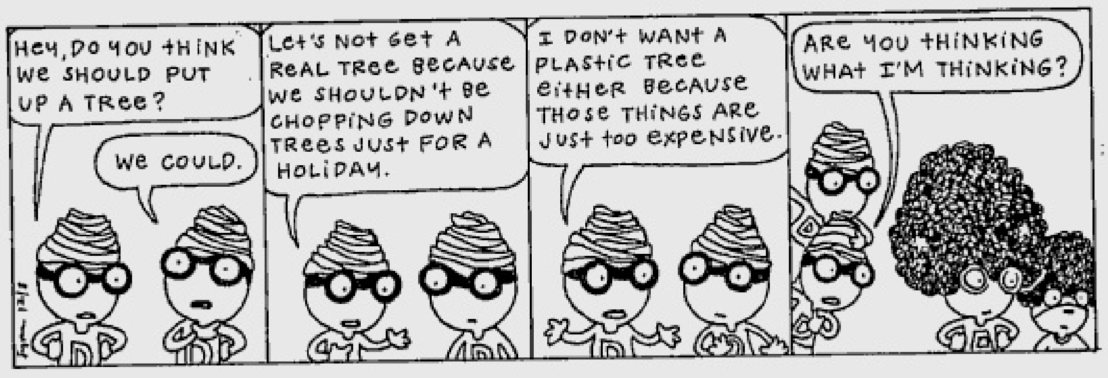
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DADDY?
WHAT'S UP, HAMMIE?
I WAS FIXING MY YELLOW TRUCK, AND I THINK I GOT SOME ON MY NOSE.
SOME WHAT?
SUPER GLUE.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, Do you think we should put up a tree?
We could.
Let's not get a real tree because we shouldn't be chopping down trees just for a holiday.
I don't want a plastic tree either because those things are just too expensive.
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a friendly, breezy energy. However, once committed to something, you give it everything you have. When you are enthused, you are supercharged! Because of this, it is difficult to maintain a balance between career and family. Nevertheless, this driving energy brings you success. Look forward to the year ahead: Your cherished dreams can come true.

Birthdate of: Kim Basinger, actress; Sammy Davis Jr., entertainer; Teri Hatcher, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today's Full Moon makes you slightly accident-prone in all your communications and transportation. Be careful when driving or walking, and think twice before you speak.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If you're not sure about certain purchases , hold off. Today's Full Moon might stress your decisions. Don't feel pressured to do anything you don't want to do.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is the only Full Moon in your sign all year. You might feel some nervous energy today. You might also be able to accomplish a lot.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): There's a tendency to be demanding and forceful with co-workers today. An undercurrent of impatience accompanies today's Full Moon. That's why you have to be especially patient .

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today's Full Moon lends a charged energy to all your friendships and dealings with groups. Be extra-diplomatic. And above all, keep smiling. Tension diminishes by tomorrow.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It is natural that you feel pulled in two directions today: career versus family. Which do you put first? You cannot ignore the demands of your family right now.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today's Full Moon stresses travel, education, publishing and all forms of transportation and communication. Fortunately, by nature you are diplomatic. Today these diplomacy skills will be tested!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Insurance matters, debt and anything having to do with inheritances can be wrapped up today. Likewise, you might easily clarify what your obligations and responsibilities to someone are.

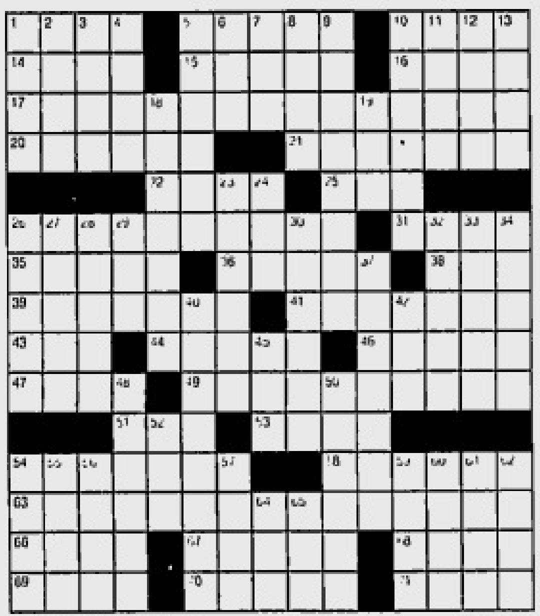
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today's Full Moon opposes your sign. You will definitely have to be patient when dealing with close friends and partners. Every Full Moon puts people on edge.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be extra-patient with co-workers today. Your desire to make improvements might be a little too intense for others. (Remember that you are a perfectionist with high expectations.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Friends who have suggestions about how to improve your life are well-meaning today. Naturally, you don't have to follow these recommendations.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today's Full Moon puts you in the classic dilemma of what to put first—career or family. Because you have so many career opportunities at this time, you cannot turn your back on them.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

12/8/03

ACROSS

1 Takes the odds
5 Frenzied
10 Attention getter
14 Eight in Madrid
15 Convex molding
16 PC command
17 "Arrangement in Grey and Black"
20 Mexican state
21 Pacify
22 Elvis __ Presley
25 Poetic contraction
26 Sentimental do-gooders
31 Ginger cookie
35 Elder Saarinen
36 Nestling's call
38 Wrath
39 Rubbing elbows with
41 Classic TV cop show
43 Actor Curry
44 Elevate
46 Montana city
47 Prophet
49 Municipal official
51 D.C. summer hrs.
53 Tax-return period
54 Self-indulgent spree
58 Nautical craft
63 Noted contestant on "The $64,000 Question"
66 Darling
67 John Jacob or Mary
68 Ms. Korbut
69 "M*A*S*H" co-star
70 Oats
71 Conspiracy

DOWN

1 Ribbon ties
2 Reverberate
3 Dilute
4 Mediocre
5 Grinding teeth
6 Latin greeting
7 Also not
8 "Casablanca" role
9 ASCAP member
10 Fall bloomers
11 Hidden fence
12 Nights before
13 Slight
18 Clip before the flick
19 Poetically unclosed
23 Holy Roman emperor
24 Innovative
26 Splinter groups
27 Stan's partner
28 Ecological region
29 His: Fr.
30 Overnight flight
32 Last inning, usually
33 Mountain ridge
34 Falk or Fonda
37 Satin-and-moire fabric
40 Characterized by ingenuity
42 Type of reaction?
45 Pigs' digs
48 Witty reply
50 Special privileges
52 Matter-of-fact
54 Roush and Hall
55 Matured
56 California city
57 Mexicali money
59 Mall unit
60 Market
61 Cogito __ sum
62 Would-be atty.'s exam
64 A/C measure
65 Nonsense!

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	T	E	P	S	■	A	L	B	A	T	R	O	S	S
O	H	A	R	E	■	G	A	U	C	H	E	R	I	E
F	A	T	A	L	■	O	B	S	T	I	N	A	T	E
A	N	I	T	A	S	■	■	■	■	S	E	T	■	■
S	E	N	E	S	C	E	N	C	E	■	G	O	D	S
■	■	■	■	S	A	L	O	O	N	■	A	R	E	A
I	M	A	G	I	N	I	N	G	S	■	D	I	L	L
D	O	R	I	E	S	■	■	■	C	R	E	A	T	E
L	I	M	N	■	I	A	N	W	O	O	S	N	A	M
E	R	I	N	■	O	C	E	A	N	S	■	■	■	■
D	E	S	I	■	N	E	W	S	C	A	S	T	E	R
■	■	T	E	T	■	■	■	■	E	N	T	I	C	E
A	N	I	M	I	S	T	I	C	■	N	O	B	L	E
L	O	C	A	L	H	E	R	O	■	A	R	I	A	S
S	W	E	E	T	E	N	E	D	■	S	K	A	T	E

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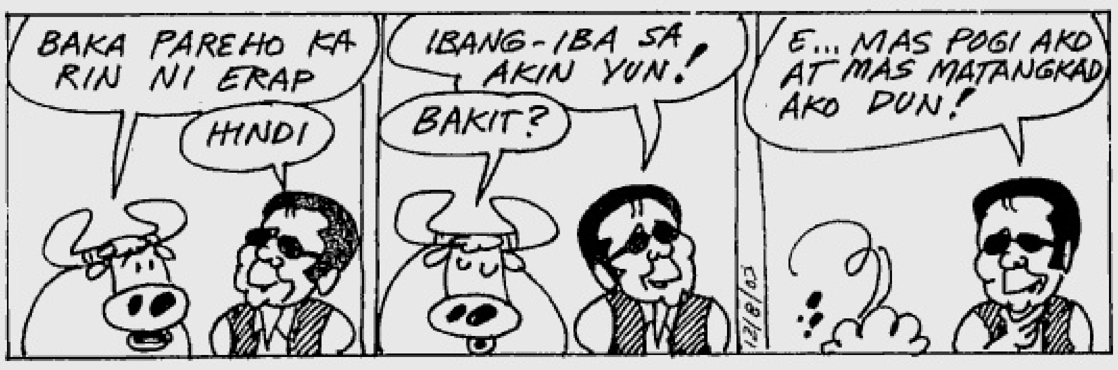
12/8/03

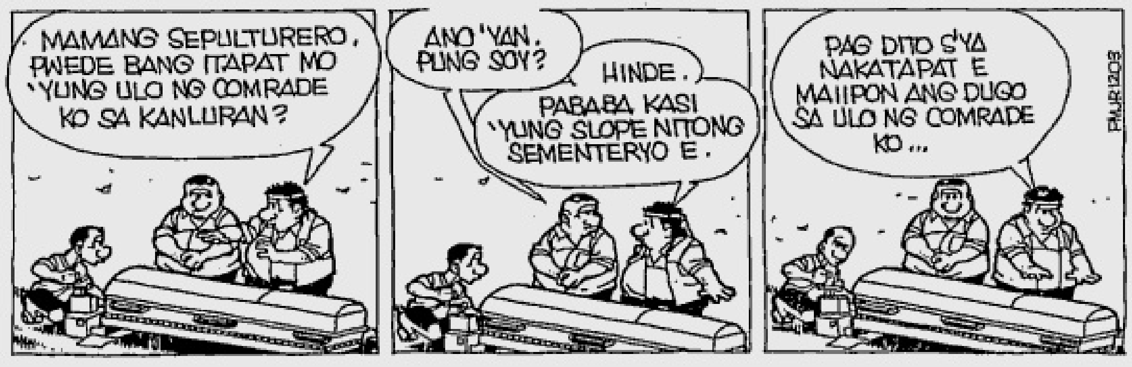
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKA PAREHO KA RIN NI ERAP
HINDI
IBANG-IBA SA AKIN YUN!
BAKIT?
E... MAS POGI AKO AT MAS MATANGKAD AKO DUN!
12/8/03

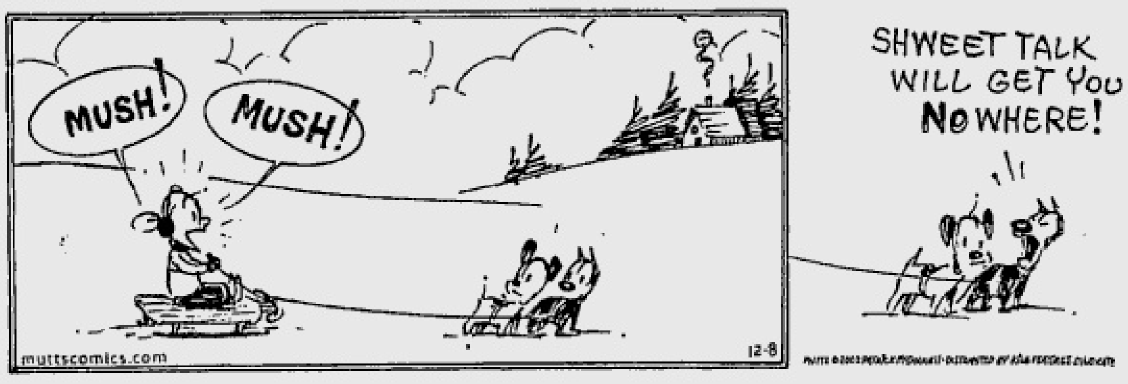
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAMANG SEPULTURERO, PWEDE BANG ITAPAT MO 'YUNG ULO NG COMRADE KO SA KANLURAN?
ANO 'YAN, PUNG SOY?
HINDE.
PABABA KASI 'YUNG SLOPE NITONG SEMENTERYO E.
PAG DITO S'YA NAKATAPAT E MAIIPON ANG DUGO SA ULO NG COMRADE KO...
PMJR1203

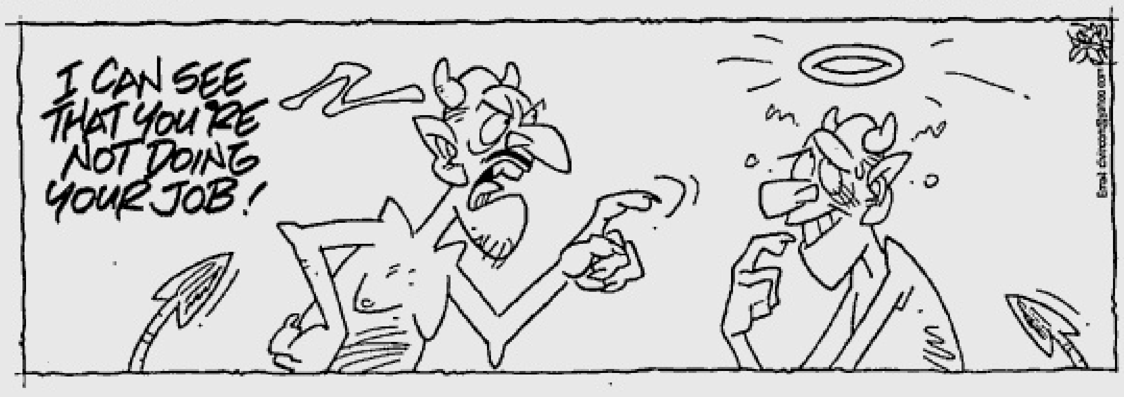
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUSH!
MUSH!
muttscomics.com
12-8
SHWEET TALK WILL GET YOU NOWHERE!

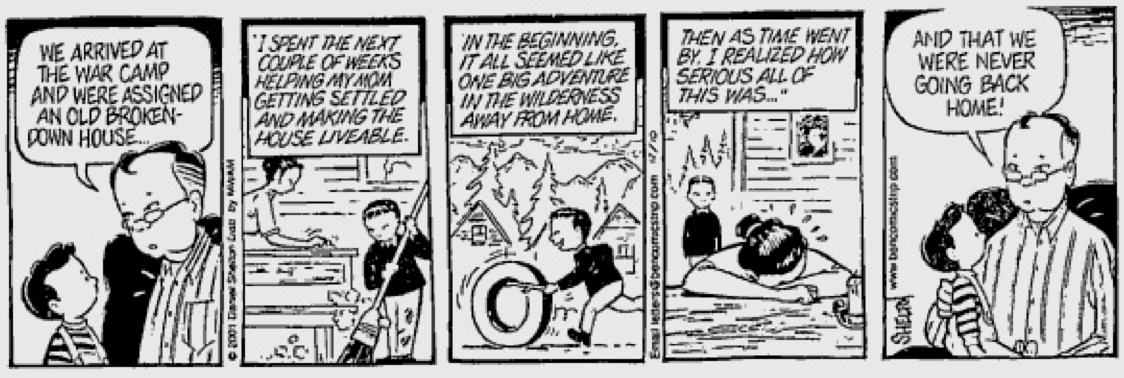
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I CAN SEE THAT YOU'RE NOT DOING YOUR JOB!

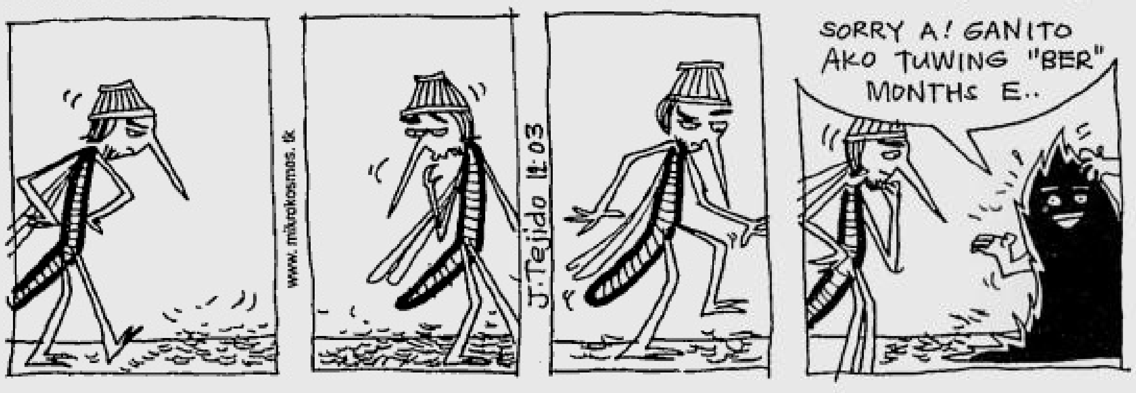
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WE ARRIVED AT THE WAR CAMP AND WERE ASSIGNED AN OLD BROKEN-DOWN HOUSE...
"I SPENT THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS HELPING MY MOM GETTING SETTLED AND MAKING THE HOUSE LIVEABLE.
"IN THE BEGINNING, IT ALL SEEMED LIKE ONE BIG ADVENTURE IN THE WILDERNESS AWAY FROM HOME.
THEN AS TIME WENT BY, I REALIZED HOW SERIOUS ALL OF THIS WAS..."
AND THAT WE WERE NEVER GOING BACK HOME!
SHELTON

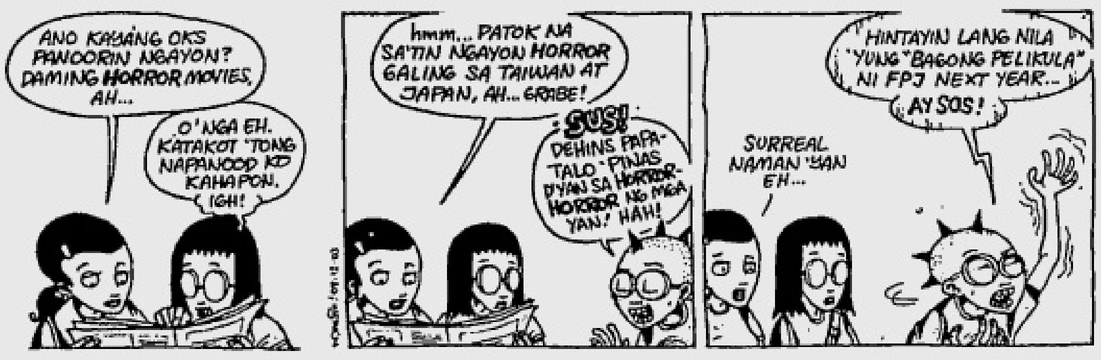
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


www.mikrokosmos.tk
J. Tejido 12.03
SORRY A! GANITO AKO TUWING "BER" MONTHS E..

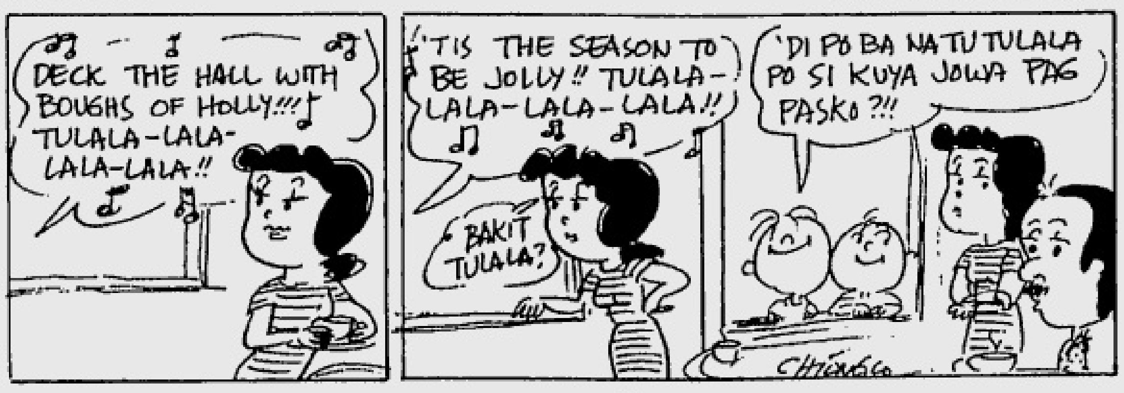
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ANO KAYANG OKS PANOORIN NGAYON? DAMING HORROR MOVIES, AH...
O'NGA EH. KATAKOT 'TONG NAPANOOD KO KAHAPON. IGH!
hmm... PATOK NA SA'TIN NGAYON HORROR GALING SA TAIWAN AT JAPAN, AH... GRABE!
SUS! DEHINS PAPA-TALO 'PINAS DYAN SA HORROR-HORROR NG MGA YAN! HAH!
SURREAL NAMAN 'YAN EH...
HINTAYIN LANG NILA 'YUNG "BAGONG PELIKULA" NI FPJ NEXT YEAR...
AY SOS!

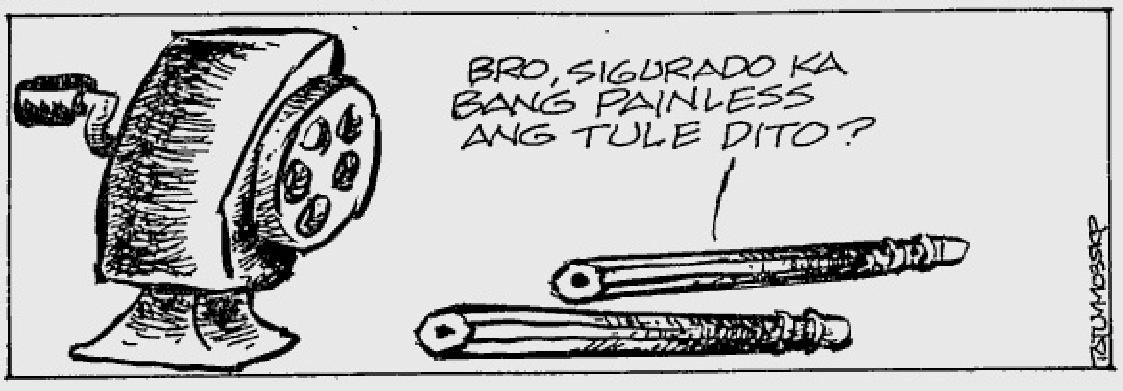
LOVEKNOTS

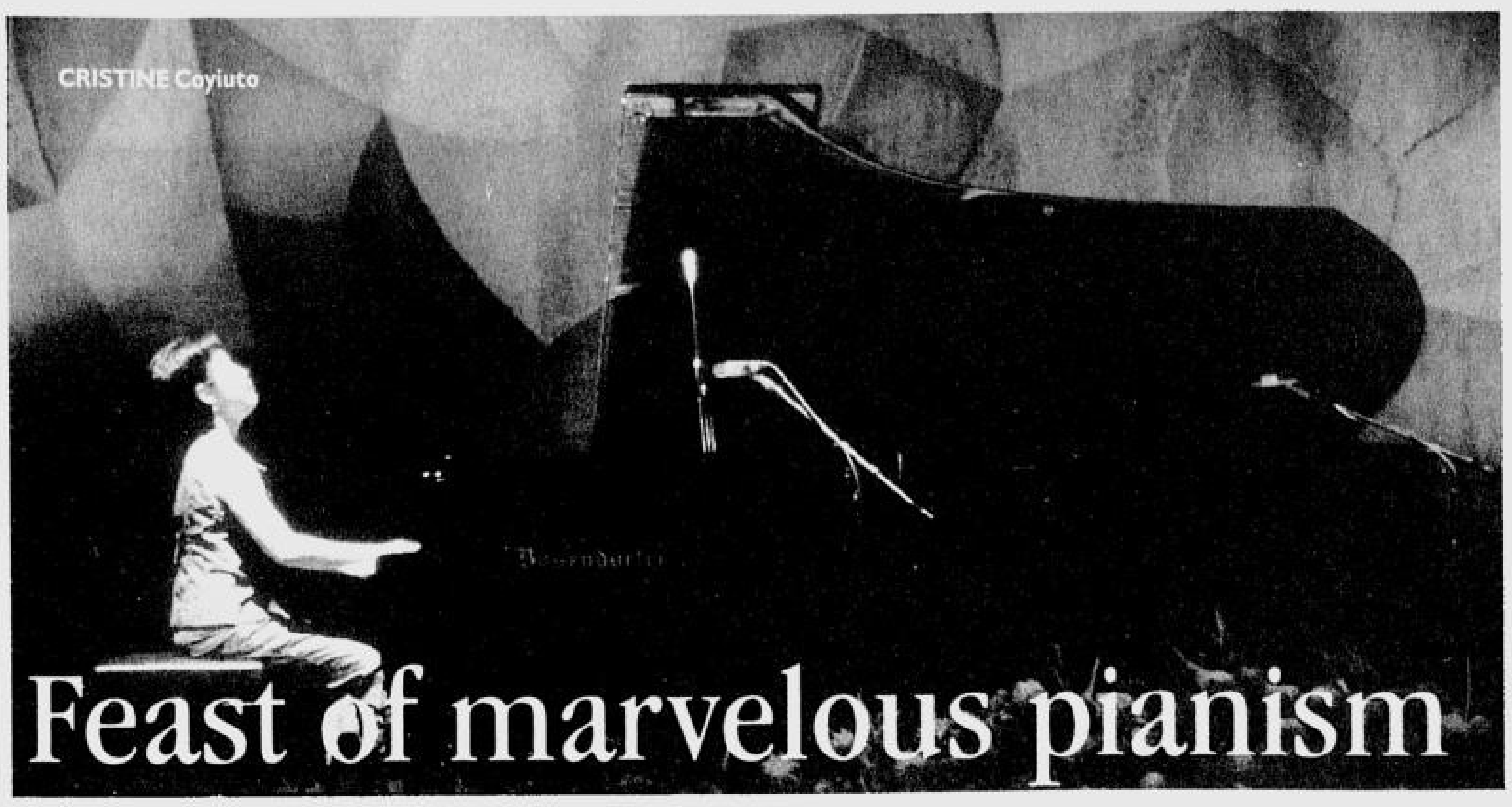
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DECK THE HALL WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY!!! TULALA-LALA-LALA-LALA!!
'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY!! TULALA-LALA-LALA-LALA!!
BAKIT TULALA?
'DI PO BA NATUTULALA PO SI KUYA JOWA PAG PASKO?!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

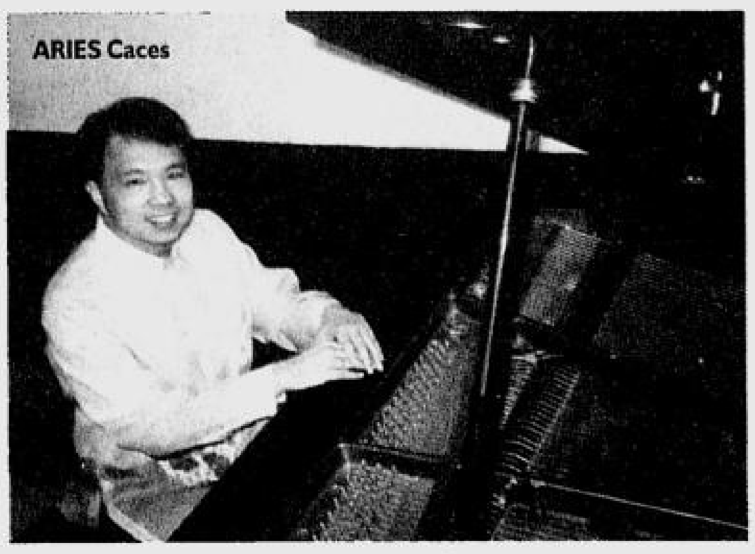
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BRO, SIGURADO KA BANG PAINLESS ANG TULE DITO?
TATUM MOSSP


CRISTINE Coyiuto

Feast of marvelous pianism

They may come from different schools and methods, but their styles enrich, not discriminate


ARIES Caces

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THERE cannot be a more gratifying musical moment than feasting on the superb pianism of our keyboard artists, many of whom have gone abroad to hone their individual talent.

Each performance is a unique, ennobling experience. The diversity of technical prowess and interpretative skill each has shown underscores the variety of schools of pianism that these performers subscribe to, which enrich rather than discriminate one another.

Over and above these differences, however, is a set of plus points that best explains their individual ravishing performance.

Foremost is the tone quality that each pianist carves out of the keyboard. It is a tone that has much integrity—articulate, lush, ample and, needless to say, caressed.

At times, the tones differ in the intensity of projection; but in essence, the quality of the tone each pianist makes is a pure aural delight.

Choreographed movement is minimized unless it is called for, as a natural expression of sentiment, baring only the essential purity of tone for appreciation.

Thus, whether listening to Aries Caces, Cristine Coyiuto or Jovianney Emmanuel Cruz, one listens with abandon, and, in fact, asks for more.

At the Equitable PCIBank's Francisco Santiago Hall, Caces, in a solo recital sponsored by the MCO Foundation, was indefatigable. He showed sheer prowess in essaying two hefty works of Liszt, "Apres une lecture du Dante" from "Annees de Pelerinage" (Pilgrim Years), Book II ("Italie"); and "Totentanz" for solo piano, after surging through works of Beethoven, Schubert and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

Interestingly, he sustained his power and etched Liszt's dramatic tones, robust and lush. In bold strokes, he rhapsodized the former, and in the latter he clearly delineated each variation with stunning virtuosity.

At Phil-Am Life Theater, Jovianney Emmanuel Cruz was dazzling in Schumann's Symphonic Etudes, likewise a set of variations whose severe demands he hurdled with audacious dispatch.

Despite some awful distractions that were made by some philistines who clapped twice in between variations, he continued playing unperturbed with oozing authority, and even managed to throw a taunting smile at the audience after the second distraction. This piece capped his program which consisted of works by Scarlatti, Bach, Chopin, Copland, Albeniz and Ravel.

"John-Em," as he is fondly called, convincingly underscored Schumann's schizophrenia as seen in the interplay of two opposing moods, the outburst of emotional turbulence and earnest introspection. His performance marked the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Elysee Treaty between France and Germany.

At the CCP Main Theater, with H.R. Ocampo's handsome "Genesis" as a backdrop, Cristine Coyiuto gave her solo recital sponsored by the Coyiuto Foundation. She displayed an enthralling tempered tone. Petite in physique, her tone is sleek and feminine.

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Quizzicals

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! But it is unusual. Study it, think about it. If you work at it a bit, you might find out.

Answer: The letter "e" does not appear once in the long paragraph.

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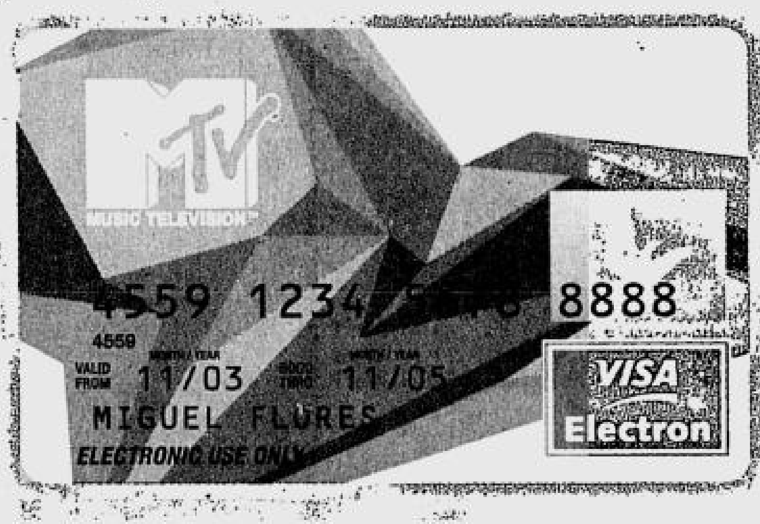

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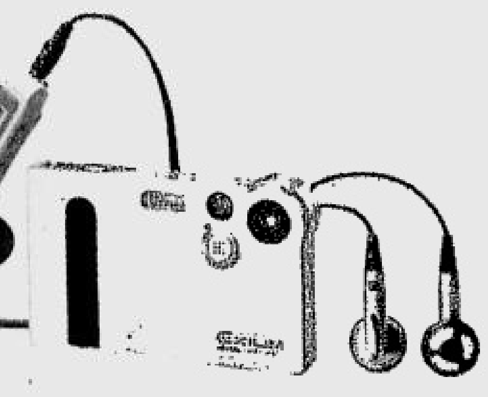

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BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY BABY

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4556, Series of 2003

Pianist Raul Sunico at FEU

SUNICO

CONCERT pianist Raul M. Sunico, dean of the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music, will be presented by the President's Committee on Culture of the Far Eastern University in a pre-Christmas concert at the FEU Auditorium on Dec. 9, 3:15 p.m. Admission is free.

Sunico graduated from University of the Philippines with the degrees of Bachelor of Music (cum laude), Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Master of Statistics. A scholarship from the Young Artists' Foundation of the Philippines enabled him to attend the Julliard School in New York, where he received a Master of Music degree.

Grants from the Amon Foundation and the New York University helped him obtain a Doctor of Philosophy degree, major in Piano Performance, from the latter, where his dissertation featured a performance guide to the Philippine Piano Concertos.

Sunico won the silver medal in the Viotti International Piano Competition in Vercelli, Italy; was a finalist in the Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano, Italy; and received the Henry Cowell Prize in the University of Maryland International Piano Competition in the United States. He was chosen as a TOYM (The Outstanding Young Men of the Philippines) Awardee for Music in 1986.

Call 7364897.

MOLIERE AT DULAANG UP

Ongoing until Dec. 14 at the Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theater, UP Diliman, is Dulaang UP's presentation of Moliere's satire on the medical profession, "The Imaginary Invalid," translated into Filipino by Rebecca Añonuevo as "Hakang Isip ng May Sakit." The play stars Roy Alvarez, Richard Cunanan, Frances Makil-Ignacio, Fonz Deza, Romnick Sarmienta and Tony Mabesa. Mabesa also directs. Call 9261349 or 0918-9280279.

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A sweetly subversive show

From page E1

opening scene in "West Side Story."

Snatches of Bob Fosse's trademark dance vocabulary (angular lines, insinuating movements) appear now and then in the choreography, but in ways more campy than sincere. And the closing song, what the playbill calls "a quasi-gospel showstopper," hilariously treads the quivering notes of "Wheels of a Dream" from "Ragtime"—a true showstopper, if there was one.

The show delights again and again in overturning expectations. The fourth wall is repeatedly broken whenever the narrator, Officer Lockstock (Jett Pangan), directly addresses the audience to talk about "Urinetown" (the *show*, not the fictional town within the show), or when Little Sally, a precocious tramp played with impish dexterity by Pheona Baranda, complains of its unexpected twist: "This is not the way happy musicals should end!"

Postmodern

Consider "Urinetown," then, as an unabashedly postmodern musical, though it's not about to wear that hefty tag on its lighthearted sleeve.

It's the first Tony-winning show we know of to elevate words like "urinate" and "defecate" to the level of charming art. It is zanily sardonic, self-referential and drowning in pastiche.

It hoists its potentially tasteless subject matter on a fairly traditional musical-comedy scaffolding (the nebbish guy-simpering girl routine was much more engaging in "Little Shop of Horrors"), but turns everything inside out by satirizing, hand in heart, its borrowed motifs. And it does all these with a pure, wickedly childlike glee.

The result is a musical that bleaches the grossness out of its topic and title, giving us a quirkily entertaining night at the theater.

You may have noticed here an aversion to recounting the storyline. It's deliberate; nothing there that's particularly memorable—something about a drought-stricken town suffering from the clutches of a mogul who's privatized all public rest rooms and requires everyone to pay up to pee, until someone cries, "Enough."

Kids will likely see shades of Flik in "A Bug's Life," but there we go again on the borrowed motifs...

JETT Pangan

MICHAEL de Mesa

See it instead for the rousing music and insane lyrics ("I see a river flowing for freedom/ I see a river just in view/ Once in the river, you are the river/ Friends on the shoreline, jump in, too"). And the strong performances—though, to be fair, they are by no means consistent across the board.

Some cast members, notably Jeremy Aguado as Mr. McQueen, play their parts too broadly for laughs, eliciting none in the process.

But boom box-voiced Jinky Llamanzares is dynamite as Penelope Pennywise, and Baranda effortlessly steals her scenes. Chari Arespacochaga, too, in a brief solo, strikes sassy sparks.

Just as with De Mesa, we need to devote a whole paragraph to Pangan, who's proving to be an invaluable addition to local musical theater after earning his chops in Pinoy rock.

Improbably enough, Pangan's Officer Lockstock grounds "Urinetown" in something like reality by playing his character as a human being. While the rest puff up their roles to cartoon-like dimensions, he settles nicely into a groove that contains equal parts bravado, self-doubt and ornery grace.

His line readings are a director's dream—razor-sharp yet dreamy—and he sings beautifully. Yep, Pangan's fiery soul-tinged turn in "Dreamgirls" wasn't a fluke at all.

The one thing that may mar an unadulterated enjoyment of "Urinetown" is the horrible audio, which should already be fixed by the time this sees print.

On the night we watched the show, the microphones were conking out one by one. There was an audible, irritating rasp every time a line got dislodged somewhere in all the dancing. And right before the end of Act 1, in the middle of the "Les Miz" number, the sound gave up completely.

Poor Rayos had to resort to amplifying his already overextended tenor to rise above the chorus. To no avail, of course. His revolution was dead even before it had begun.

"Urinetown" runs Dec. 5-20 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati City. Call 8927078 or 8915610.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

Feast of marvelous pianism

From page E3

But what she lacked in power, she amply made up in elan, expressed in legate pianism that makes the tones sing that her strong fingers essay. She infused much poetry in her rendition of the Chopin pieces, as she boldly etched the wide range of tone in Fantasie in F Minor, Op. 49.

Exquisite elegance clothed her playing of the tender Berceuse in D-Flat Major, Op. 57. She charmed her listeners with the fine singing between a pair of lovers on the gondola alluded to in Barcarolle in F-Sharp Major, Op.60.

As can be noted, arresting tones, for all their beauty, can be rendered inutile by an utter disregard of stylistic nuance. Often, a pianist's performance falters because of this cerebral weakness, of basically failing to fully understand the essence of the piece the said pianist is performing.

Obviously, the three pianists above know their métier. Their program was not specialized but consisted of works of contrasting stylistic nuances from the Baroque to the contemporary period.

The beauty of their playing was that, as each moved from one piece to the other, the interpretation followed the canon of each stylistic nuance. Self-esteem did not overshadow the intent of the composer, who was validly interpreted in the context of his time.

John-Em gave appropriate running notes, a feat in itself. Happily, there was unity between what he uttered and performed. For instance, he said that Scarlatti was more transparent than Bach, and that in playing the latter's works, the pedal had to be used because the works had thicker texture than Scarlatti's where the pedal should be neglected.

He did play Scarlatti's Two Sonatas in A Major alluringly, indeed, with perfect clarity, underscoring the buoyant sonority of the piece. Other highlight of his playing was Copland's "El Salon Mexico," effectively arranged by L. Bernstein.

Coyiuto articulated her thought in the personal notes she made. Through them, she showed she truly knew the pieces she performed. Her Bach, Chaconne in D Minor, arranged by Busoni from Partita No. 2 for violin, scintillated with much verve. Masses of sound piled one after the other like the thick walls of a cathedral.

SOLOIST Jovianney Emmanuel Cruz

In her notes, she said that playing Bach as an opener serves as an invocation, which she, indeed, played with soulful flair.

Caces, whose program was bereft of notes, showed his close familiarity with the pieces he played. He was simply divine in the two Beethoven pieces, Rondo in C Major, Op.51, No.1, and Fantasie, Op.77. Balance of tone and gentle expressiveness combined to etch Beethoven's classical orientation.

He played another set of variations: Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's Variation Serieuses, Op. 54. Here, Caces resurrected Beethoven's spirit as he played one variation after the other with surging continuity, building his power up until the last variation was fully rendered.

Young pianist to watch

At the Namcya Festival held in CCP, young pianist Maria Regina "Ina" Montesclaros impressed the audience with her rendition of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in C Minor, Book I; Schubert's Impromptu No. 3 in A-Flat Major,Op. 90; and Kasilag's Scherzino.

Ina, who is only 10 years old, certainly has a bright career as a concert pianist to look forward to in the future. She is definitely the young pianist to watch.

Her tones are muscled and sing. In time, she will mature into a fine artist with the training she gets from her teacher, professor Cecile-Basilio-Roxas of Sta. Isabel College, who has done much wonder to young piano talents.

For feedback, text us at
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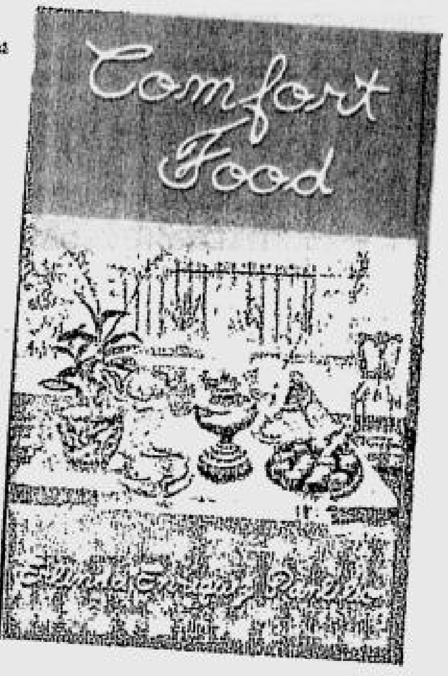
Tasteful comforts

A new book of essays is a writerly-cum-gustatory feast of that most personal of cuisines—the comfort food



By Lito B. Zulueta

REVIEW

IF POWER is the ultimate aphrodisiac, then food is the supreme synaesthesia. It not only conjures a complex of senses, sacred or profane, it also summons the most delicious memories.

This seems the premise of "Comfort Food," published by Anvil Publishing and which will be launched tomorrow at 5:30 p.m. at the Turf Room of the Manila Polo Club. Expect the gastronomic crowd to eat up the whole place.

Edited by Erlinda Enriquez Panlilio, herself a food connoisseur, "Comfort Food" combines a brew of genres—the how-to, the personal essay, and the memoir—in a wicked concoction of information, humor, milk and memory.

Not surprisingly, the editor dedicates it to the memory of her late father, "the quintessential gourmet." In her own contribution to the anthology, "Bangus in My Eden," Panlilio remembers her dad whipping up his favorite *sinigang na bangus* using native guavas from the family's own fecund guava tree in the backyard.

The effect was not sour, but sweetish, the pinkish look constituting "a total dining experience, appealing to the senses—sight, smell, and taste."

The writer presents to us the image of a daughter eager for her papa's unique dish. Of course, by the end of the essay, the father has practically disappeared in the gush of acclaim for the indestructible *bangus*: "Someday I must write an ode to *bangus*, the one constant in my life, the indestructible, nutritious, satisfying, versatile fish that has sustained me since childhood. My vision of

TASTEFUL/ F3

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Kids say the darndest things

"Yaya Niya, Nanay Ko" (Her Nanny is My Mommy)
By Ma. Corazon Remigio
Illustrations by Auri Asuncion Yambao
Unicef Manila, 2002

"Sipsip-Sipsip!" (People Can Do It Differently)
Illustrations by Rita Badilla
Unicef Manila, 2002

By Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz
Contributor

THE RELEASE of these two books early this year by one of the most outstanding authors for children's literature today is cause to celebrate.

REVIEW

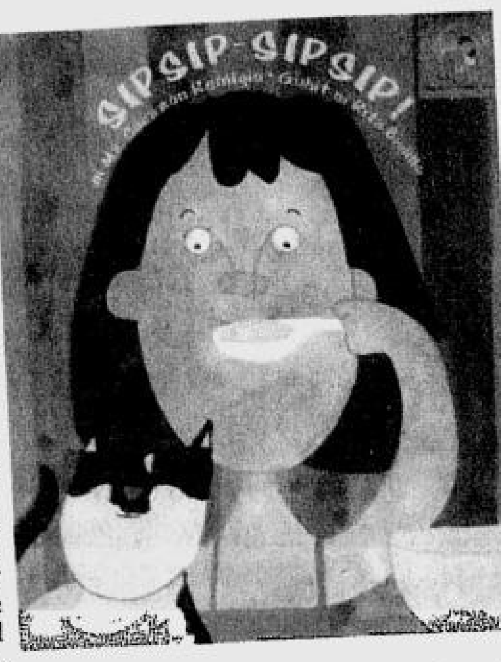
It is difficult not to take note or to "ignore" these books. Remigio's earlier titles, both award winners, "Bru-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha, Bru-hi-hi-hi-hi" (Adarna, 1995), a story of the friendship between a child and an elderly woman she has stereotyped to be a "witch," and "Papel de Liha" (Adarna,1996), a touching ode to mothers, rank high on many children's list of favorite books.

It is regrettable, Remigio fans have lamented, that advertising copy has kept her from writing more stories for children. It must be the discipline of her job, though, that has honed her natural sense of cadence and her gift for restraint and precision in her language, whether in English or in Filipino.

These qualities are exemplified once more in these recent titles, both written in verse. Written from the point of view of a child in Catbalogan whose mother has been a nanny in Makati to Anne May for five years now, the narration is simple yet poignant.

It begins with an enumeration of all the things her mother does for Anne May—bathes her, feeds her, tucks her to sleep, accompanies her to school, the mall, and everywhere else, sleeps with her in an air-conditioned room. Why, they even pray, sing, dance and recite poetry together.

Veering away from melodrama, the child narrator simply says after highlighting the five years her mother has been away from her, that her mother has only been with her for three Christmases since she was born.


SIPSIP-SIPSIP!

In typical child's reckoning of time, it was last Christmas, the Christmas before that, and the Christmas even before that last, last time.

Her mother comes home after she has earned and saved enough—and when Anne May becomes big enough to do things for herself.

I want my mother to also be my *yaya*, the child wishes out loud, instead of my *lola*, for she is elderly and can get impatient.

Anne May in Makati has grown up and so has our narrator in Catbalogan. She also can now manage by herself, with little help from adults. But she knows that she needs her mother (*"Nanay na Nanay ko"*) to mother her, too, instead of being another child's *yaya*.

The story ends on a quiet note, leaving the reader speechless and misty-eyed because of all that it has left unsaid about the present state of affairs in our country that cannot provide equal opportunities for every child.

The issue of mothers having to work overseas and spending more time with other people's children than their own was also the subject of "Uuwi Na ang Nanay Kong Si Darna" by Edgar Samer (Adarna, 2002). In that story, the son left back home wanders why his mother is always photographed carrying a child.

Lighter note

"Sipsip-Sipsip!" is on a far lighter note. It is the slurping sounds children are not supposed to make at dinner table or in polite company, as adults often remind children.

And what delightfully rude sounds our child narrator makes when she munches peanuts, bites boiled corn on the cob, and *chicharon*.

Always observe table manners, her *lola* tells her, as the well-mannered are respected. But what a discovery she makes in her Chinese friend Ming's house—where Ming and her Grandma never eat quietly. It is an appreciation for the good food on the table, she is told.

And from that day on, the narrator makes sure she remembers to eat quietly with her *lola* at home and to eat and slurp with gusto at Ming's dining table.

These books, available at PowerBooks, are part of a 10-book series conceptualized by Tahanan Books for Young Readers for Unicef's A Child First! Storybook for children ages 3-5 years.

Other authors in the series are Sacha Calagopi, Luis Gatmaitan, Ferdinand Jarin and Rene Villanueva. The illustrators are the brightest names in the field as well: Ruben de Jesus, Lyra Garcellano, Daniel Tayona, Abigail Goy, Ige Ramos, Jason Moss, Paolo Lim and Endo Pascacio.

Villanueva edited the series and provided worthy and thoughtful translations for the original Filipino text.

Since parallel texts appearing on the same page in different font sizes have been the more popular practice in recent years, the introduction of the English text on the very last page of the storybook is a refreshing change.

The technique of having the illustration in full color on every page of thick book paper with just the single-language text is a timely reminder to us all that there are ways and ways of presenting parallel texts without cluttering the page! This is what we would want books from the Philippines to look like.

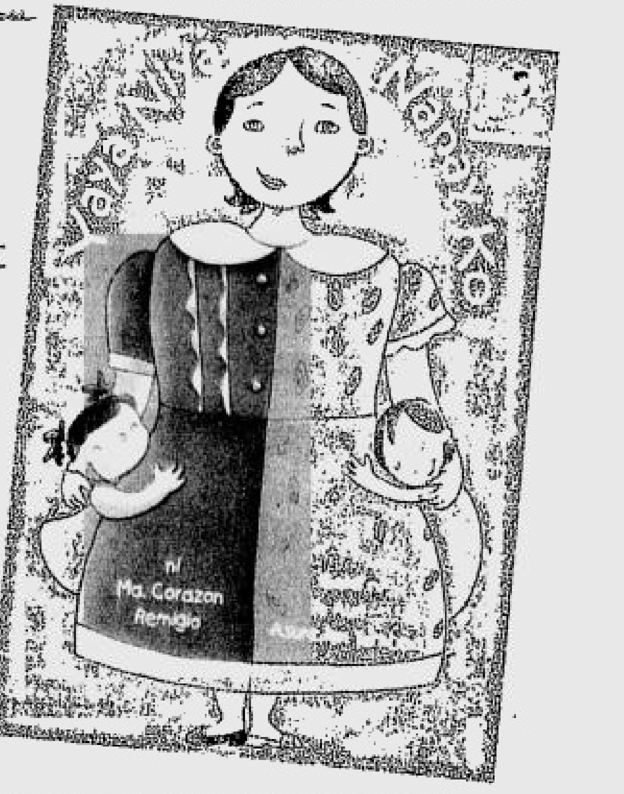
I hope these books have large print runs and are circulated more widely than previous children's book series, which were not even available at local bookstores.

Thus, another moving classic on child molestation in that series, written by Villanueva, "Ang Batang Ayaw Gumising" (The Child Who Would Not Open Her Eyes), continues to remain unknown.

The author is a member of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People. Call 3723548 or adarnahouseeadarna.com.ph.

E-mail the author at nenisrc@hotmail.com

One of the most outstanding children's lit authors today releases two new precious works



Collection of lullabies launched today

ACTRESS Chin-Chin Gutierrez, recently named by Time Magazine an Asian heroine, debuts as a musical artist and record producer with "Uyayi: A Collection of Philippine Lullabies."

The album will be launched at 9 p.m. today as part of the "Full Moon Nights at the Loop" concert series at Mag:net Gallery Quezon City, The Loop, ELJ Center, ABS-CBN Compound.

Featured artists and arrangers include Bo Razon, Joey Ayala, Tots Tolentino, Malou Matute and Rachel Conanan.

Gutierrez considers Uyayi an "intimate advocacy." In the three years it took to complete the project, the actress-environmentalist traveled all over the Philippines to do field research, interviews and recordings with various tribal and linguistic groups which shared their cradle music.

CHIN-CHIN Gutierrez

Over 30 sources collaborated in the making of "Uyayi."

Many of the songs, says Gutierrez, are free-flowing improvisations, mostly spontaneous and unstructured. She collected almost 100 folk tunes.

The songs that made it to the album were carefully selected to represent the different bio-regions of the country—*burol* (hills), *kapatagan* (plains), *baybayin* (coasts) and *kabundukan* (mountains).

Ethnomusicologist Verne de La Peña of the University of the Philippines College of Music provided academic direction to the project.

Aside from 17 tracks of fresh interpretations performed by Gutierrez, the special double CD also features recordings from the original sources and a short "video journal" recounting some of the most memorable moments in carrying out the project, produced with a partial grant from the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

"Uyayi" is available at all Mag:net Plus outlets. Call 410095 or e-mail magnet@info.com.ph

ASSUMPTION
High School Class of '79
COOKBOOK

ALUMNAE COOKBOOK LAUNCHING
The class of Assumption HS '79 recently launched its fundraising cookbook at One McKinley Arcade, Bonifacio Global City. Guest of honor was President Macapagal Arroyo (HS '64). Shown in photo are: (from left) Sr. Luz Emmannuel, Cynthia Tinsay Gonzales, Carmela Ongsiako Isabela, Marissa Orosa Concepcion, Marivic Puyat Limcaoco, Annie Lim Kawpeng and Assumption Alumnae president Judy Araneta Roxas. The cookbook is available at Assumption San Lorenzo Alumni office and at Fully Booked Bookstore. Proceeds of sales will go the Assumption Mission Schools and campus improvements.

New art and decor shop opens in Pasig

TIMELESS Accents, a furniture and gallery shop, opened recently with Gift Gate's Virgie Ramos, Talk 'N' Text's Asi Taulava, and artist Remy Boquiren as guests of honor.

The works of Sikat, a group of young artists, comprise the opening exhibit of the shop at 114 E. Rodriguez Ave., Kaimitoville, Ugong, Pasig (right across the Toyota Motors Corporation showroom).

The shop offers rough-hewn, solid-wood furniture—swings, benches, tables, wishing wells—for outdoors and indoors.

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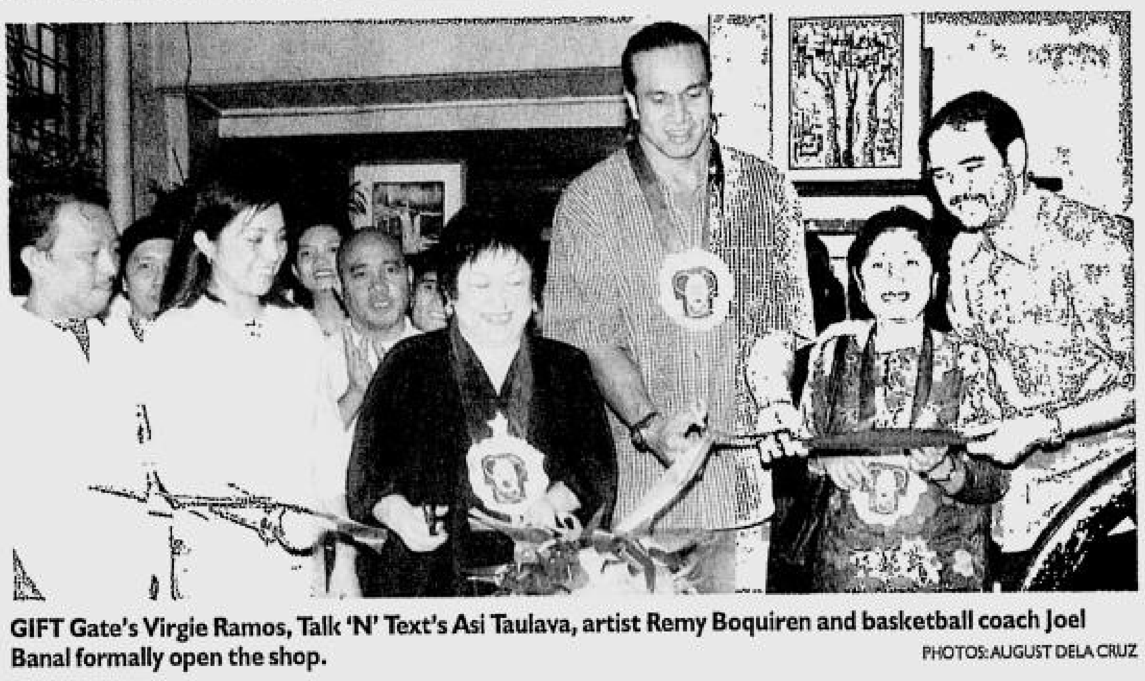

GIFT Gate's Virgie Ramos, Talk 'N' Text's Asi Taulava, artist Remy Boquiren and basketball coach Joel Banal formally open the shop.

PHOTOS: AUGUST DELA CRUZ

COACH Banal and wife Jenny with the Sikat group of artists led by its president, Pol Mesina (back row, third from left)

COMFORT (FOOD) WOMAN. Editor Erlinda Enriquez Panlilio comes up with a filling buffet of personal essays.

Tasteful comforts

From page F1

Eden would be breakfast of boneless *tinapang bangus* with *sinangag* (garlic fried rice), and scrambled eggs with onions and tomatoes. Lunch would be *sinigang na bangus sa bayabas*, and dinner would be *rellenong bangus*... The *bangus* would be all belly in my Eden."

But what is comfort food? As much as she tries to, Fe Maria Arriola can't quite put a handle to it, but having pangs of guilt over a daughter's needling, explains it as "gustatory emotional crutch": "Am I cold? Have I schooled myself to be so independent and rational, or, heaven forbid, repressed, to need comfort from food, and for that matter, from anything or anyone?"

Tall order

Now, that's a tall order: to ascribe a dish to a person. To essentialize a person in food terms is the height of culinary folly. But she remembers her mom pouring coffee over her plate of rice (is that edible?), and eating alone.

"So, just one more time, I made myself coffee, took out some cold rice, poured the steaming coffee over the rice to make a soupy porridge, ate, and felt good about myself and the world... Like the rice, I was no longer cold."

So what does that reveal of her? That she's her mother's daughter, and that odd tastes run in the family.

Other comfort foods aren't as odd, although they're irredeemably quirky and quaint. Would anyone believe, for example, that the favorite comfort food of National Artist and (literary) "mom" Edith Tiempo is "*dinugoan*" (pig's or cow's blood stew)?

And the maternal person that she is, she can't help but endow love to the preparation, ala "Like Water for Chocolate": "There could be only one version of *dinugoan*—that one prepared by loving hands that creatively transformed, by an imaginative ritual, a fowl's rawest constituents into a dainty marvel of a dish."

The same maternal instinct compels Adelaida Lim to pass on her penchant for mashed potatoes to her children: "It's difficult to go wrong with mashed potatoes... Sick in bed, my children will ask for it, and that will be my signal that their fever has broken. I know they will live because a request for mashed potatoes is a sign of life. The good life."

Writer-teacher Anthony Tan remembers the "chicken in shark-infested stew" that his mother used to cook. The gourmet dish is really a stew of shark's fin. So he makes an appeal: "Please don't tell Ang Lee, Jacky Chan and Ralph Fiennes who have appeared on TV to campaign against the buying and consumption of endangered species like sharks; please don't tell them the buying hasn't stopped and so the killing hasn't."

Because he's an inveterate ramen eater and a fixture of Ma Mon Luk, writer-teacher Jose "Butch" Dalisay is often teased by his wife as "Mr. Noodles."

But he's secure in his peculiar taste: "I guess that's where the true comfort lies in comfort food: the assurance of the permanence of certain states and sensations—not only in the gut, but in the heart and in the mind."

Historic dish

Beauty icon Tingting Cojuangco, who is set to acquire a Ph.D in History from the Dominicans, cannot but be culturally perspicacious when she explains that her favorite *cocido* is otherwise known as the more popular *pochero* or the less known *linaga*.

And the history of a dish is inexorably personal and emotional: "Certain foods transport me to a world of the past, to loving memories of my family. My favorite dish, *cocido*, can make me laugh with joy and also make me cry, remembering."

In the feverish way she enumerates the dishes an ordinary Iluko goes through a day, children's book author Carla Pacis may give the impression that her notion of comfort food is really comfort cuisine—the works, the whole galaxy. But she's not writing so much about Iluko cuisine as about her childhood in Vigan, that universe of taste and decorum.

Marra Pl. Lanot also has something of the child in her when she gives a toast to the lowly—and lovely—milk.

"I don't know if there's anything erotic in milk," she writes. "Maybe there is. But what's important is that it strengthens my body as it recollects a certain innocence."

For corporate and culture leader Jaime Laya, "anything will do." "The curious thing is that food doesn't bring back sad memories. Almost always they are of happy times, sometimes so happy it hurts."

And happy and hurting perfectly describes the other essays by Rowena Tiempo Torrevillas, Simeon Dumdum Jr., Luisa Igloria, Bambi Harper, Joy Virata, Ramon Sunico, Maria Victoria Rufino, Sonia Roco, Alfred Yuson, Maria Yotoko Chorengel, Ed Maranan, Felice Prudente Sta. Maria, Peque Gallaga, Gene Gonzales, Susan Lara, Maribel Ongpin, Scott Garceau, Rita Ledesma, Gemma Cruz Araneta, Kitty Go and Clinton Palanca.

In the end, the essays show that food is inevitably comforting when, in the routine of meals, one sets aside precious morsels of memory out of the ordinary, like food set aside for a rainy day.

"To me, comfort is needed not only for momentous events," writes Zeneida Amador. "Comfort food is needed when a day is simply out of the ordinary. That is why I am a comfort (food) woman."

Read the book and find out your own comfort food. Here is one rare instance when the proof of the eating is in the reading.

Catholic nun, ex-kidnap victim, to receive special writer's award

WRITER, folklorist and Mindanao scholar Sr. Delia Coronel, ICM, will receive the Parangal Hagbong literary prize of the University of Santo Tomas on Dec. 13 at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex.

SR. DELIA Coronel

Given by the Varsitarian, the 75-year-old official student publication of UST, the Hagbong is awarded to alumni who have distinguished themselves in letters. Previous recipients were Rolando Tinio, Rogelio Sicat, Genoveva Edrosa-Matute, Ponciano Pineda, Reynaldo Duque, Erma Cuizon, J. Elizalde Navarro (for his art writings), Lilia Pablo Amansec, and Bienvenido Lumbera.

Herself a Varsitarian member during her student days at UST, Sr. Coronel is the former vice-president for research of the Mindanao State University. In the late 1960s, she wrote and published "Legends and Stories of the Philippines," a treasure trove of folk stories which has undergone several editions and printings.

In the 1970s, Coronel was abducted by Mindanao secessionist rebels. She wrote of her ordeal in a celebrated series in the Daily Express.

In the 1980s, Coronel led a team of scholars that recovered and reconstructed the "Darangen," the ancient epic of the Maranaos that antedated the coming of the Muslims. Coming in several books, the epic was translated in strict English meter by Coronel. The important work won the National Book Award.

The Parangal Hagbong is the highlight of the 2003 Gawad Ustetika, the longest running campus literary contest in the country. Winners will be named in poetry, the short story and the essay in English and Filipino.

Coronel will receive a trophy especially sculpted by Paete artist Angelito Baldemor.

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UST Press launches 'Homecoming' screenplay, 18 other books

THE UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas Publishing House will launch 19 new titles on Dec. 12 at 3:30 p.m. at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex.

Leading the titles is "Homecoming and Small Voices: The Screenplays" by Gil Portes, Senedy Que and Adolf Alix Jr. The book contains the scripts of "Homecoming," the celebrated movie about the SARS epidemic which is an entry to the forthcoming Metro Manila Film Festival; and "Mga Munting Tinig (Small Voices)," the highly acclaimed movie which garnered local and international awards early this year.

Other drama titles to be launched are "Ambon, Ulan, Baha (Sarswelang Pinoy)" by Frank Rivera; and "Mga Dulang Pambata sa Estilong Kambayoka" by Arthur Cassanova.

Literature. "FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) about Poetry" by Ophelia Dimalanta and Gemino Abad; "ST: Mga Sanaysay at Tula" by Lilia F. Antonio; "Mukhang Maarte" by Glecy Atienza; "The Nymph of MTV" by Angelo Suarez; "Tilamsik ng Panitik" by Rustica Carpio; "Paano Nagsusulat ang Ina" and "Sagradong Abo" by Ligaya Tiamzon Rubin; "Mayong" by Abdon Balde Jr; and "Paete" by Cornelio Africano.

Science. "The Living with Nature Handbook" by Abercio V. Rotor.

History. "The Centennial History of the Philippine Medical Association" by Educardo de la Cruz, MD and Perla Santos Ocampo, MD.; and "Collaborator (Political Collaboration in World War II)" by Augusto de Viana.

Philosophy and theology. "Kalatog" by the UST Center for Contextualized Theology and Ethics; "Readings in the Philosophy of Education, Cultures and Values" by Lourdes Custodio; and "In His Presence, Praises" by Belen Tangco.

Textbook. "Functional Oral Communication" by Perla Villamarzo, Estrella Cruz and Josephine Relis.

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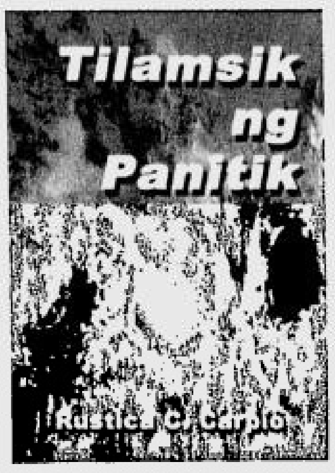

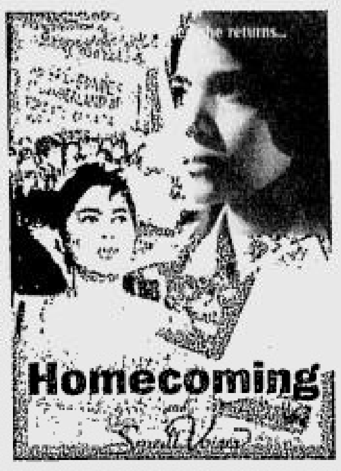

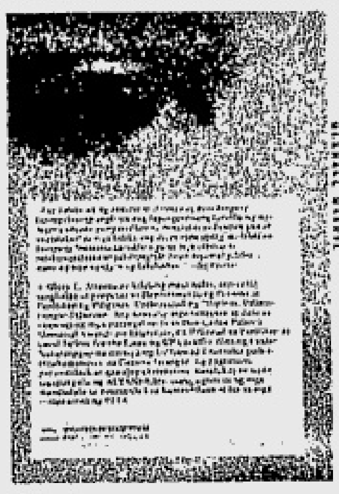

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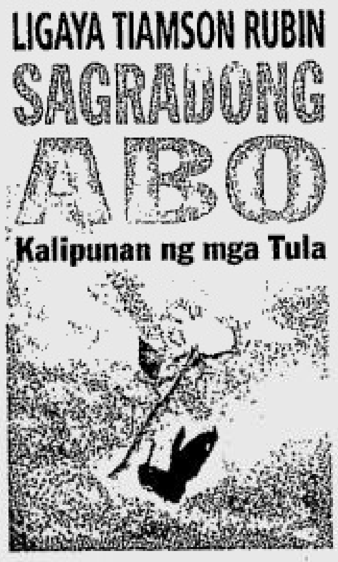

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3. The participants may use Fujicolor or YKL films.
4. Each participant can submit any number of entries. Prints should be 4"x 6" (4R), to be printed on Fujicolor Crystal Archive paper, unmounted.
5. Participants must submit their entries for processing and final printing at the Fujifilm booth located at Pearl of the Pacific Boracay.
6. Film negatives of winning entries are to be submitted immediately upon notification of contest winners.
7. All winning entries become property of the Triathlon Association (TRAP) of the Philippines and The Alternative Events Group, Inc. (AEG) organizers, who will have the exclusive right to use any or all photos entries for publications, promotions, etc.

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LIFESTYLE

Arts Design

2 women image tradition and modernity

House interiors and geomancy become emblems of self

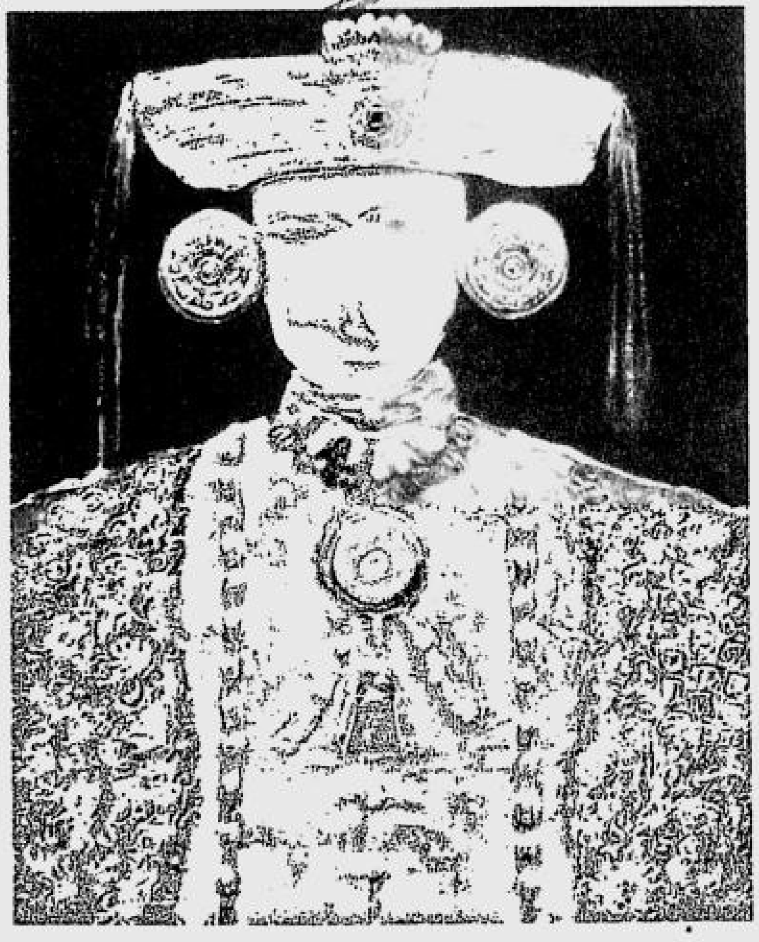
By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE NEWLY renovated Art Plaza at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall offers gallerygoers a most welcome alternative to the increasingly cramped environs of SM Megamall's Artwalk and Makati's Glorietta. One gallery that has reopened there is Artistree, owned by Vic Salta, which mounts shows on paintings and sculptures (a posthumous tribute to Solomon Saprid, who just passed away, is still ongoing.)

The inaugural painting show features young artist Valerie Anne Valero, a 21-year-old graduate of food service from O.B. Montessori, and a certified chef who primarily dabbles in paint. She has had two successful solo shows, the first "Balay-Balay," at Heritage, when she was 19, and the second, "Fusion," a sell-out show held at Artistree last year.

Though she claims painting is only a hobby, Valero derives utmost pleasure working on a variety of media—acrylic, pastel and charcoal—and in a dynamic profusion of styles that auspiciously began as neo-impressionism and has since evolved into hardcore abstraction.

TWO/ G2



"JADED Empress 2," by Lizanne Uychaco

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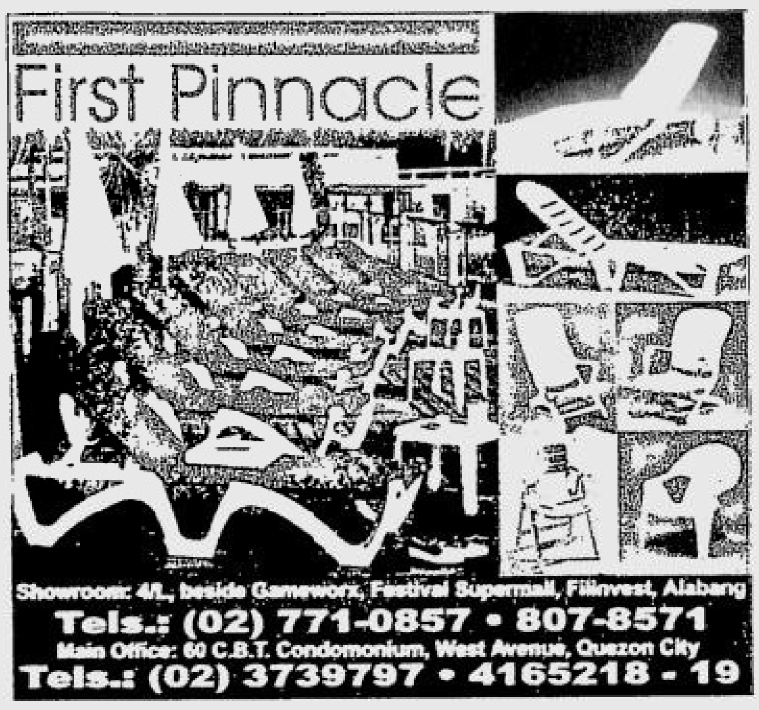

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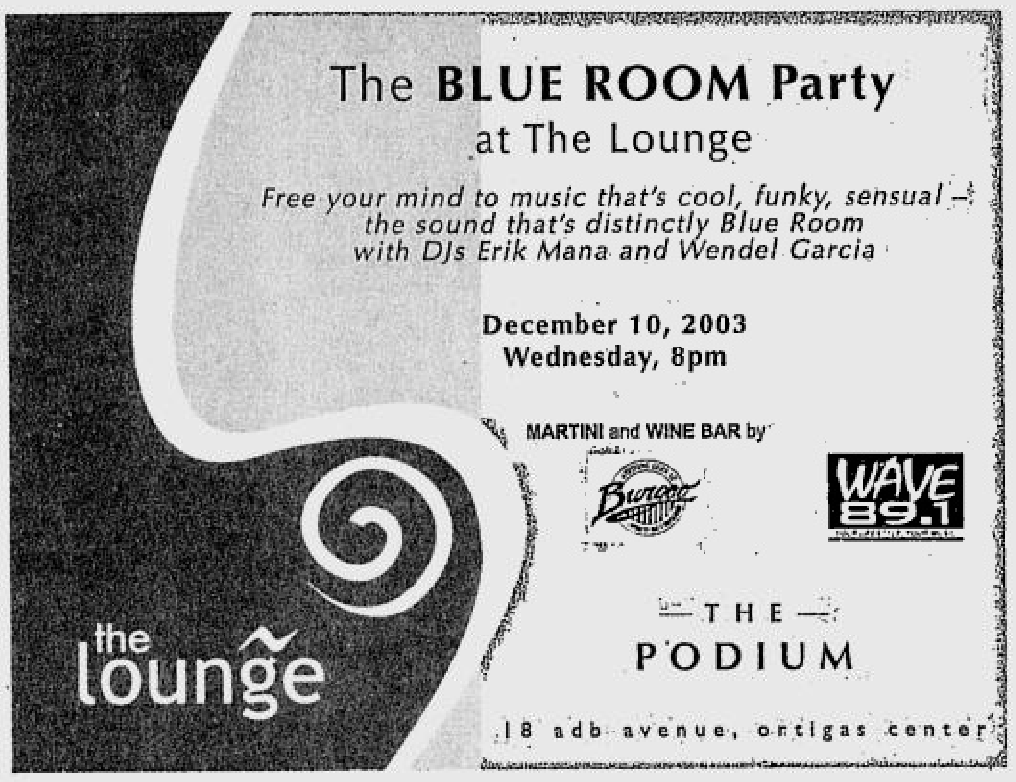

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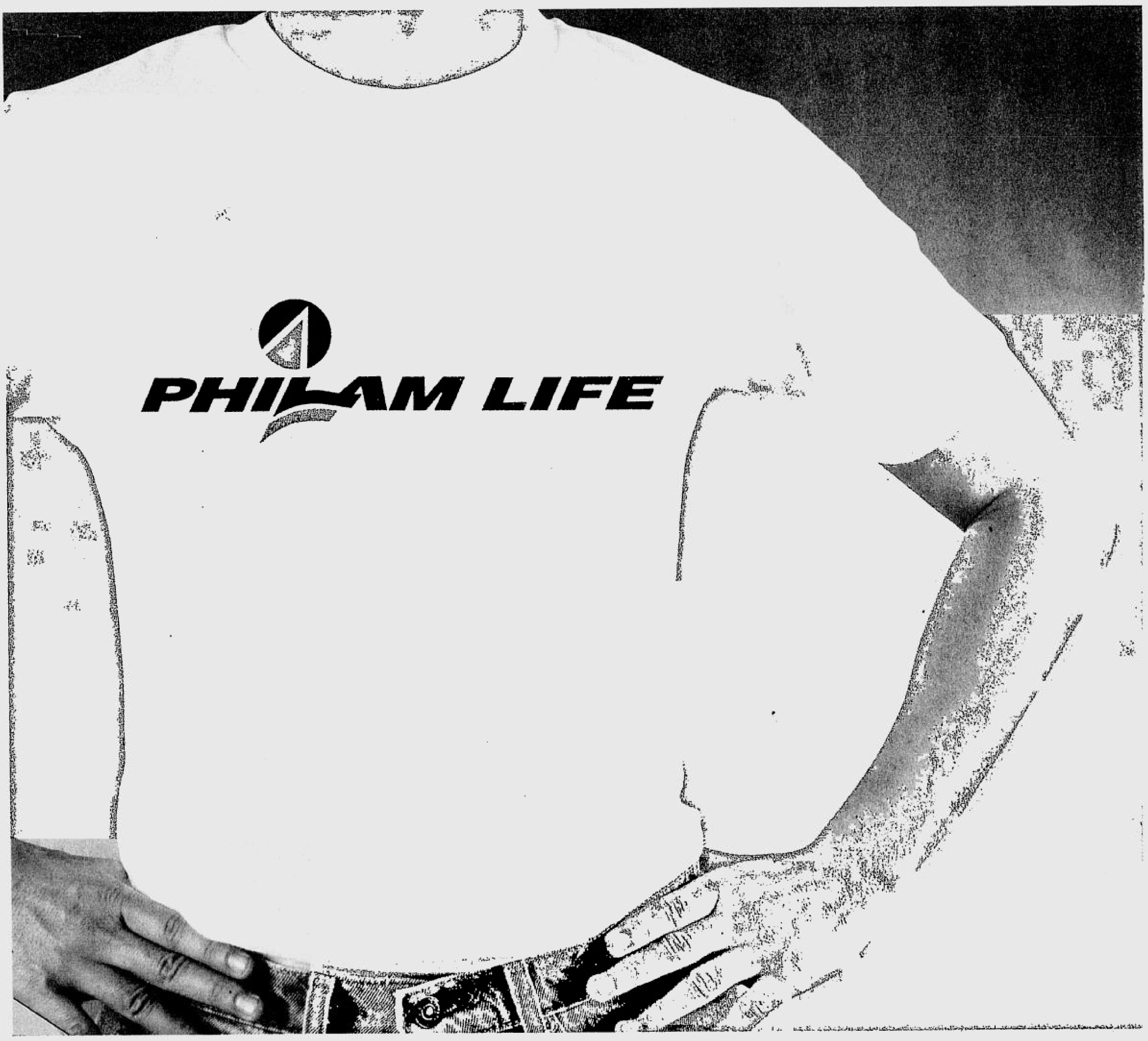

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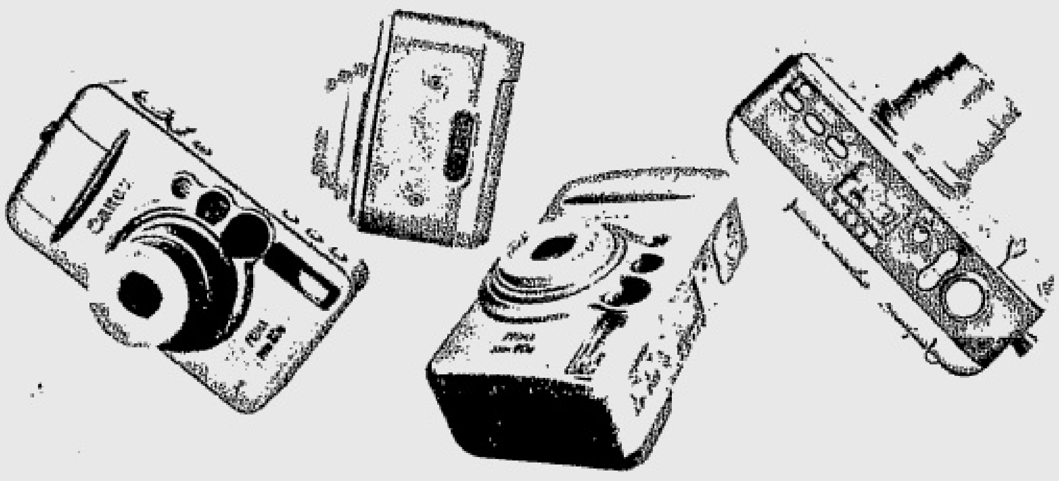

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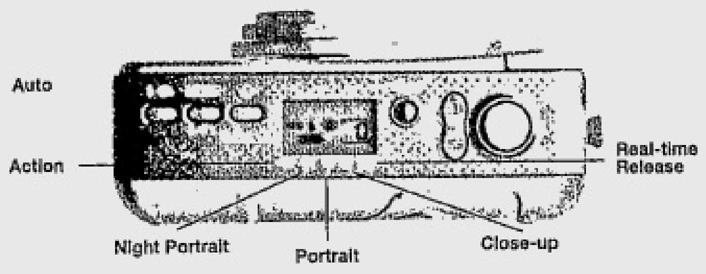

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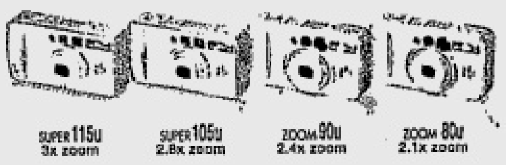

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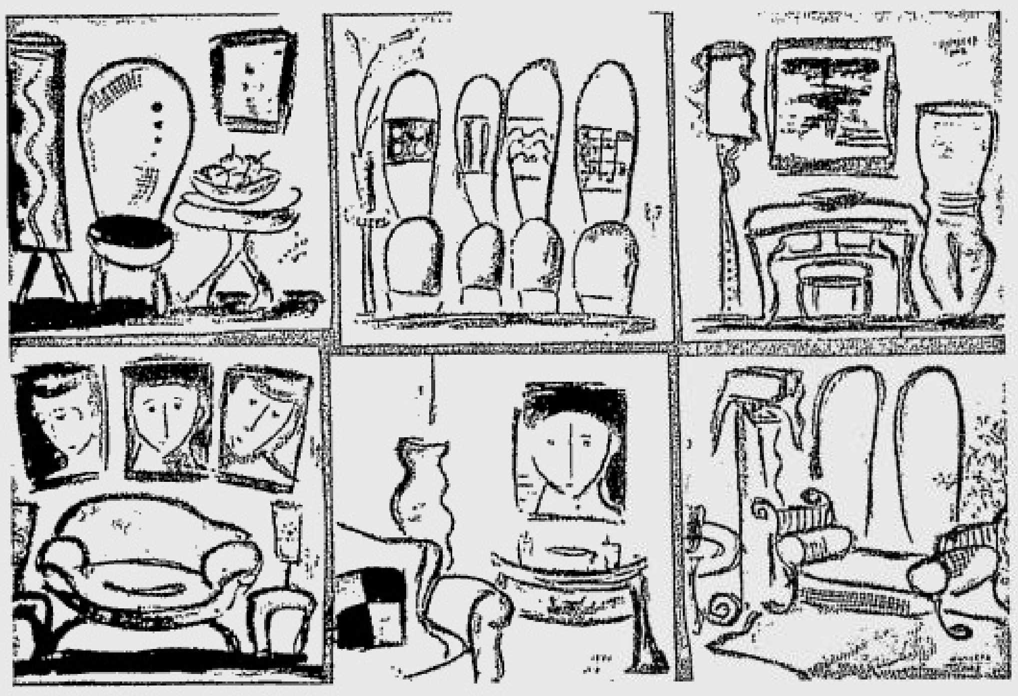
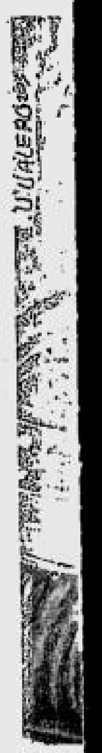


CHARCOAL drawings of interiors by Valen Valero



“INT

2 women image tradition a

From page G1

In the show “Mix ‘N Match,” (until Dec. 23), Valero shows her propensity for figuring the space of myriad possibilities, the cramped nooks and crannies of home, in order to conjure the clutter of everyday living. From the fusion evident in patterns of fabric, upholstery and floor tiles to the seeming quietude lurking beyond narrow square windows, she captures heightened sensations and expansive and inclusive views.

Valero has, as always, struck a deep connection with interiors, having been living in a high-rise condominium in Greenhills, which doubles as her studio. She devotes a suite of charcoal drawings to the subject of furniture and accessories in mirthful mix-and-match, showing a quirky pictorial sense.

What proves truly surprising is Valero's suite of abstract pieces, presumably her way of pushing her art to enable us to see what she is capable of configuring with brush and paint. Though a bit out of sync from her usual images, these works simply reinforce the unpredictability of her figuration.

Here, Valero resorts to the bold colors of her palette, predominantly fields of yellows and reds, with their gentle splashes of whites and grays as contrapuntal hues.

It is propitious that the artist has continued to mine her art in her shift to abstract forms. She bridges the gap between two styles, a challenge that she overcomes with flying colors.

Uychaco's Oriental signs

The art of Lizanne Uychaco belongs to the realm of signs and symbols, mainly grafted from the age-old tradition of feng shui, which has swept the West perpetually in search of balance and harmony.

Being Chinese-Filipino, Uychaco has remained faithful to her Chinese roots, even as she explores a wide realm of modernist motifs with which to navigate her art.

In this show at the Galerie Joaquin, which the artist calls “Asian Charms,” (until Dec. 24), Uychaco mesmerizes the viewer with her gallery of characters culled from Chinese art and culture, as well as concepts and precepts found in their folk tradition, including systems and interpretation of geomancy, particularly the practice of feng shui. Such auspicious elements as water, the blood of the universe, charms and amulets, and a host of calligraphic symbols are all incorporated in her work in mixed media.

Uychaco, who has AB Literature and Journalism degrees from St. Scholastica's and masteral degrees in economics and business administration from the Ateneo and the University of Asia and the Pacific, is vice president for operations of Globe Telecoms.

A firm believer in feng shui, she has worn a coin as a neckpiece from childhood upon the behest of a Buddhist monk who prescribed it to strengthen

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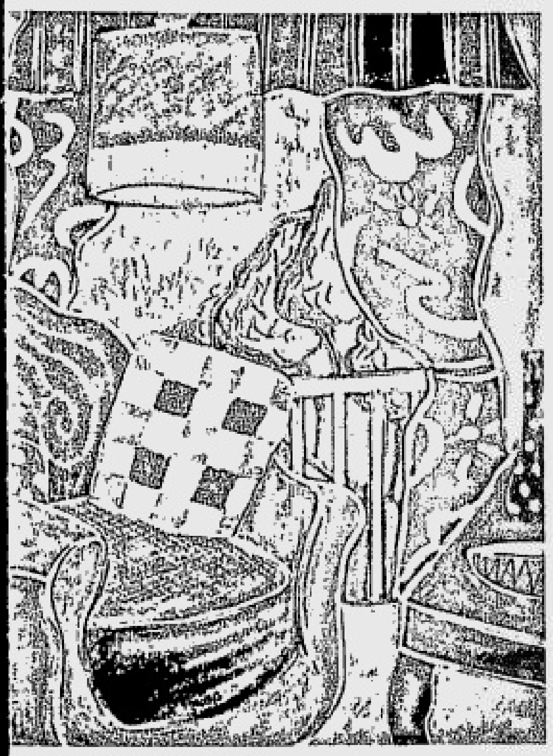


ERIOR," by Valen Valero

nd modernity

her then frail health.

The pieces Uychaco has created have a rich and almost sculpted textural surface, the better to show the charms of the old.

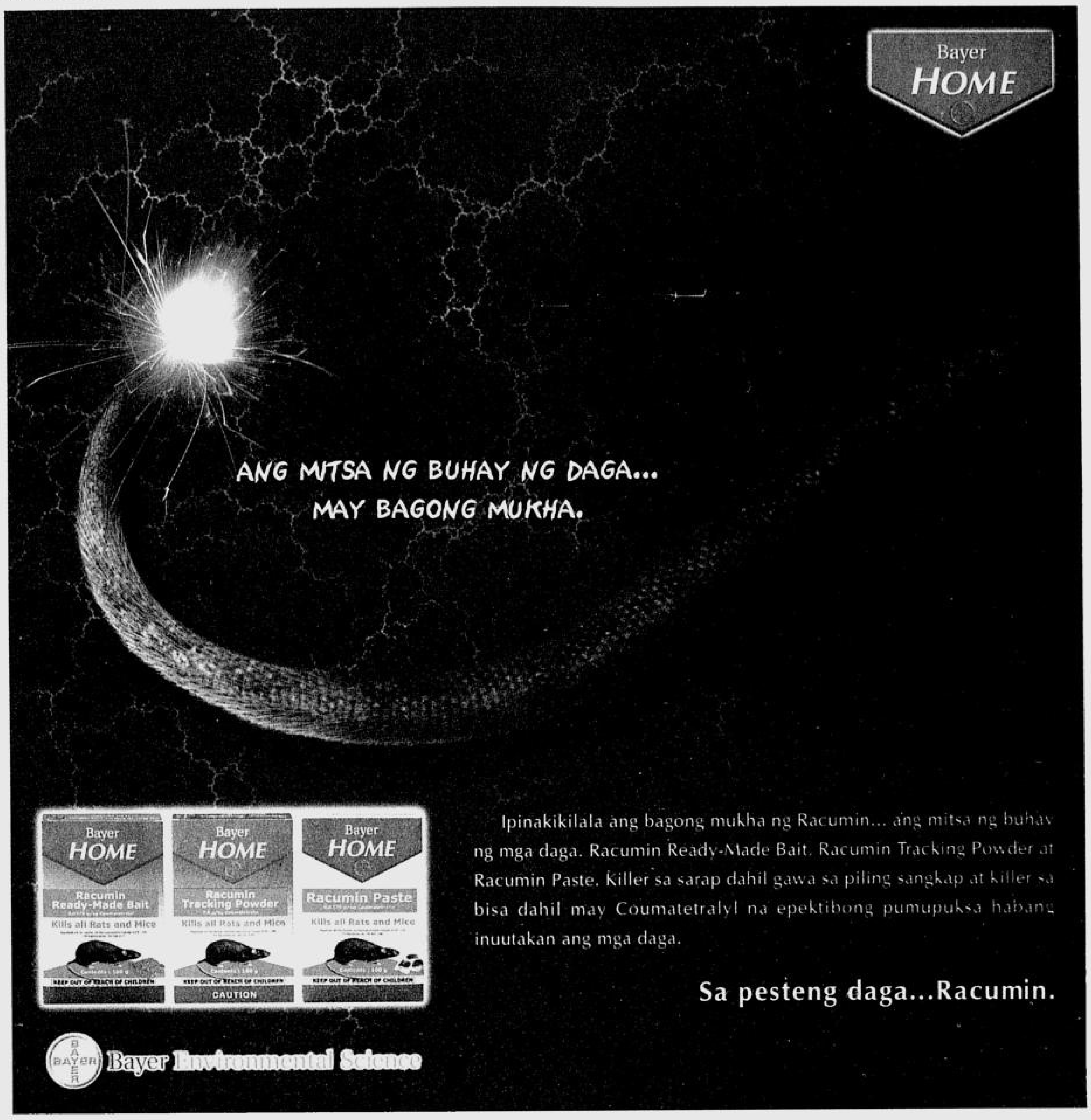
In the series titled "Jaded Empress," she portrays the noble class by focusing on their bejeweled presence evident in the adornments and apparel, and highlighting the jade and softstone dangling from their necks and ears that signify great wealth and imperial taste.

There are also the pieces "Sacred Path" and "Meditation 1," which show circular figures as if in continuous rotation, with squares in the center of the circle, with the surrounding life of water and land.

Uychaco has a series devoted to horses and dragons, animals commonly used to describe ridges and mountains. She has conjured them as harbingers of good luck and prosperity. She enhances them with calligraphic symbols that connect the spiritual and physical worlds. Painted in gold and silver, these animals become all the more distinctive with the use of bold and luminous backgrounds, dotted with ubiquitous coins and pervasive body-mind gestures.

There are other signs and symbols in this show of auspicious art, images that evoke harmony, integrate the relationship between people and the places they inhabit, and reassert the primacy of ancient wisdom.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com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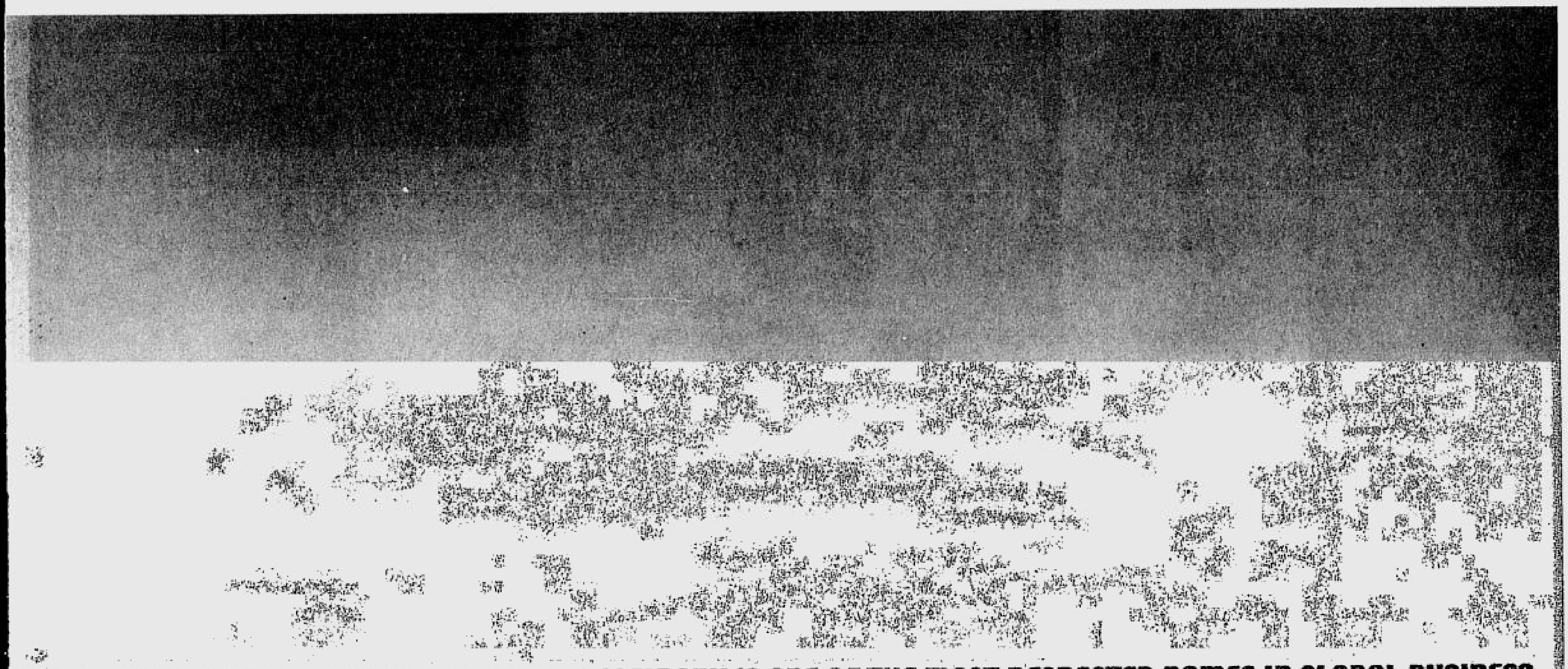

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Joaquin presents Uychaco's feng-shui art

GALERIE Joaquin features Chinese-Filipino artist Lizanne Uychaco in "Asian Charms," which shows 20 latest works in mixed media. The show opens on Dec. 11.

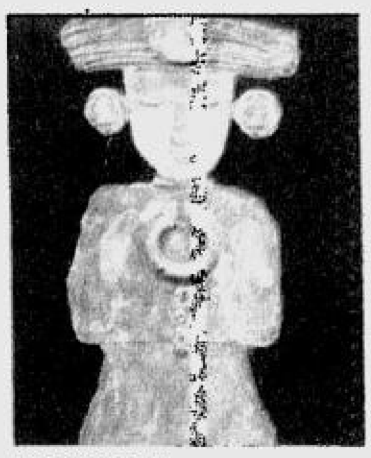
For the show, Uychaco has prepared larger works, with more than half in 24" x 20" dimensions. Three works are symbolic of the Wheel of Life and are aptly titled "Meditation 1," "Meditation 2" and "Sacred Path."

Four works show lucky and prancing horses while "Coins 1, 2 and 3" are a celebration of wealth.

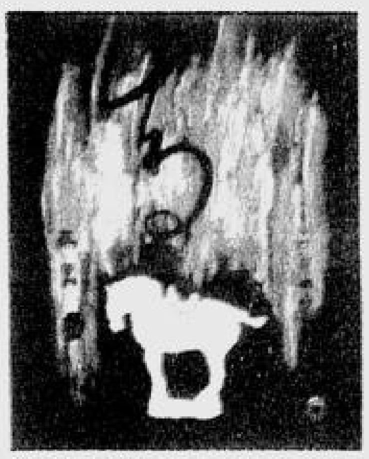
Uychaco's art has been eagerly picked up by the art market because they are associated with good fortune and fine aesthetic sense.

In "Asian Charms," she incorporates antique finds, colored stones, charms and amulets to distinct feng shui concepts, elements and symbols.

The show runs until Dec. 24. Galerie Joaquin is at 371 corner P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan, Metro Manila. Call 7239253 and 7239418.



"EARTH God"



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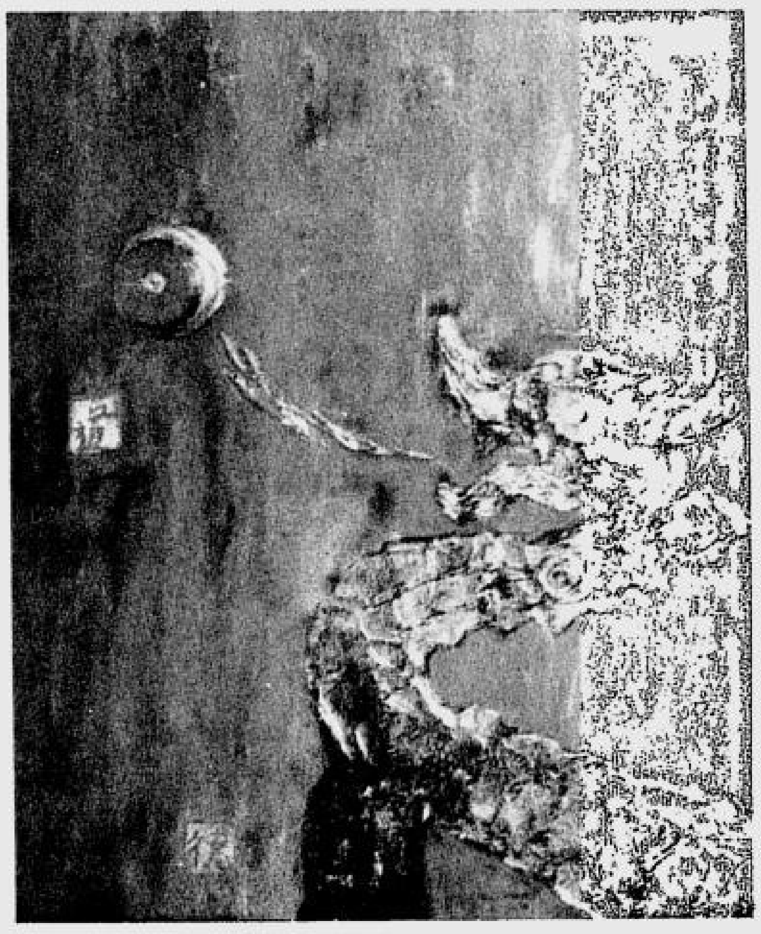

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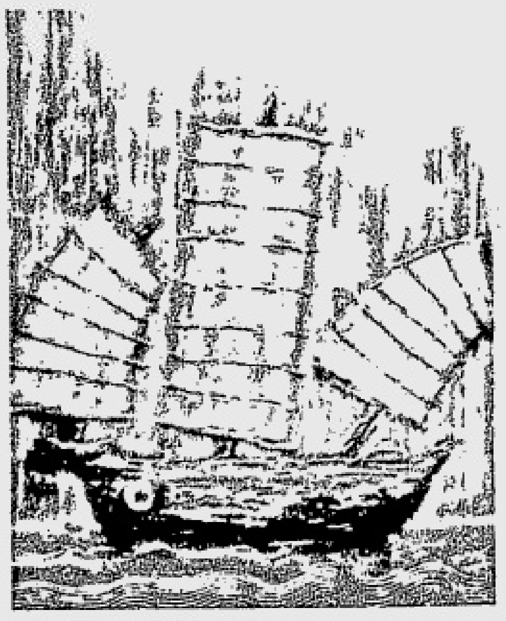
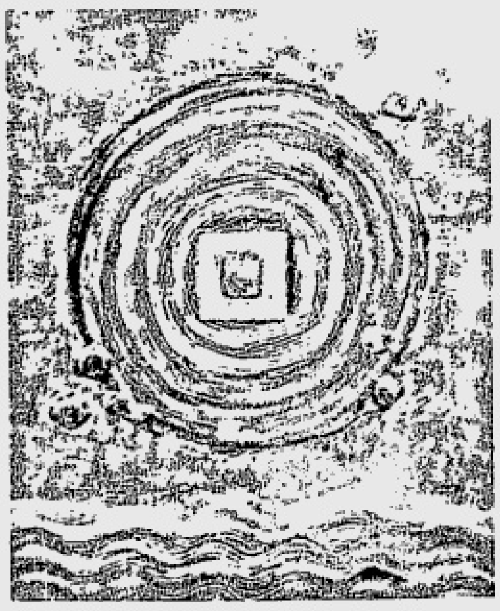


"SMOOTH Sailing I"



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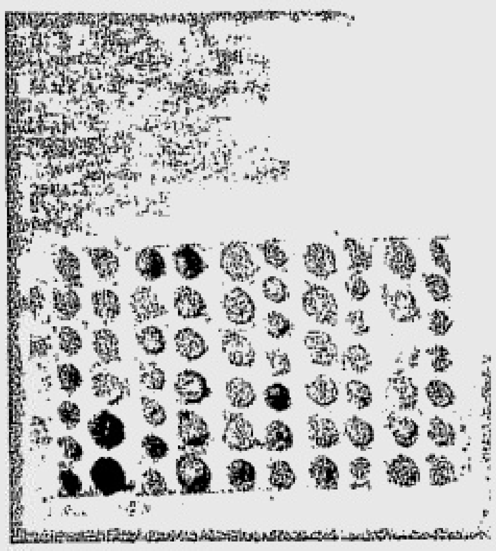

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